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About FreePint

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

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

ISSN 1460-7239

Editorial

I'm constantly staggered by the amount of energy there is in the information world. I talk to associates around the world through instant messaging every day, and hear that they're flying off to conferences and exhibitions all over the place.



When they're not giving talks at conferences then they're posting to their blogs. Even when they're at the conference they're blogging, and posting audio files of what they've heard that day.

For instance, take a look at the blogging buzz around the recent 'Computers in Libraries' conference in Washington DC, now in its 20th year <<http://www.infodayblog.com/>>. Many different people blogged the same event and there's even an 18 minute audio 're-cap'.

Spend a few minutes looking at the work that goes into blogs like ResourceShelf <<http://www.resourceshelf.com>> and you can't help but get the feeling that this is a very exciting time to be working with information resources online.

Yes, there are problems in the information world at the moment. Staff cuts in universities <<http://digbig.com/4dabh>>, the state of library buildings <<http://digbig.com/4dabj>> or the closure of corporate information centres.

I think it's a problem of definition -- how do you define the information world? There are many who wouldn't class themselves as being part of the information industry -- a large chunk of FreePint's membership, for instance. However, I think that they *are* a part of the industry when they use, purchase and disseminate information, whatever industry sector their organisation is actually in. The information industry spans all sectors and is important at all levels.

The information world is huge, and growing every day through the generosity and energy of information professionals who attract people to it. For instance, see today's article about encouraging new blood into the profession, especially in more out-of-the-way locations.

Today's FreePint also includes an overview of Freedom of Information legislation for practitioners, which introduces our new in-depth report that is published today <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>. The latest issue of VIP is also just out, and compares three M&A business information products <<http://www.vivavip.com>>.

This is a great time to be working in the information industry. However it's up to us to define and shape it, through energy and willingness to share our experiences, by supporting each other and by keeping up with the latest technology. Doing these things means we put ourselves firmly at the forefront of the information revolution, and in a position to solve some of the problems it presents.

Best regards

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Jinfo is a database of 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 editorial is entitled "Lessons learnt from redundancy!".

To read the latest Jinfo Newsletter and to subscribe to receive it twice-monthly by email, visit <<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Assistant Librarian

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3881>>

Do you have library & enquiry desk skills and also web page/content management skills? 2 roles available, 2 months and 5 months.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Researcher

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3908>>

Excellent training opportunity for bright and proactive Researcher to work in a stimulating business environment.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Financial Researcher Analyst

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3910>>

You will be providing consultancy services to your clients, advising on best source approach and methodology.

Recruiter: City Professionals

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 23 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter

<<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>> and over 70 in the Jinfo database <<http://www.jinfo.com/>>.

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"Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners"

This report is written for practitioners in jobs focused on, or in roles influenced by, freedom of information legislation.

Focusing on key elements of the legislation and guidance from relevant coordinating authorities in the public sector, the report offers up-to-date and timely advice on the key issues.

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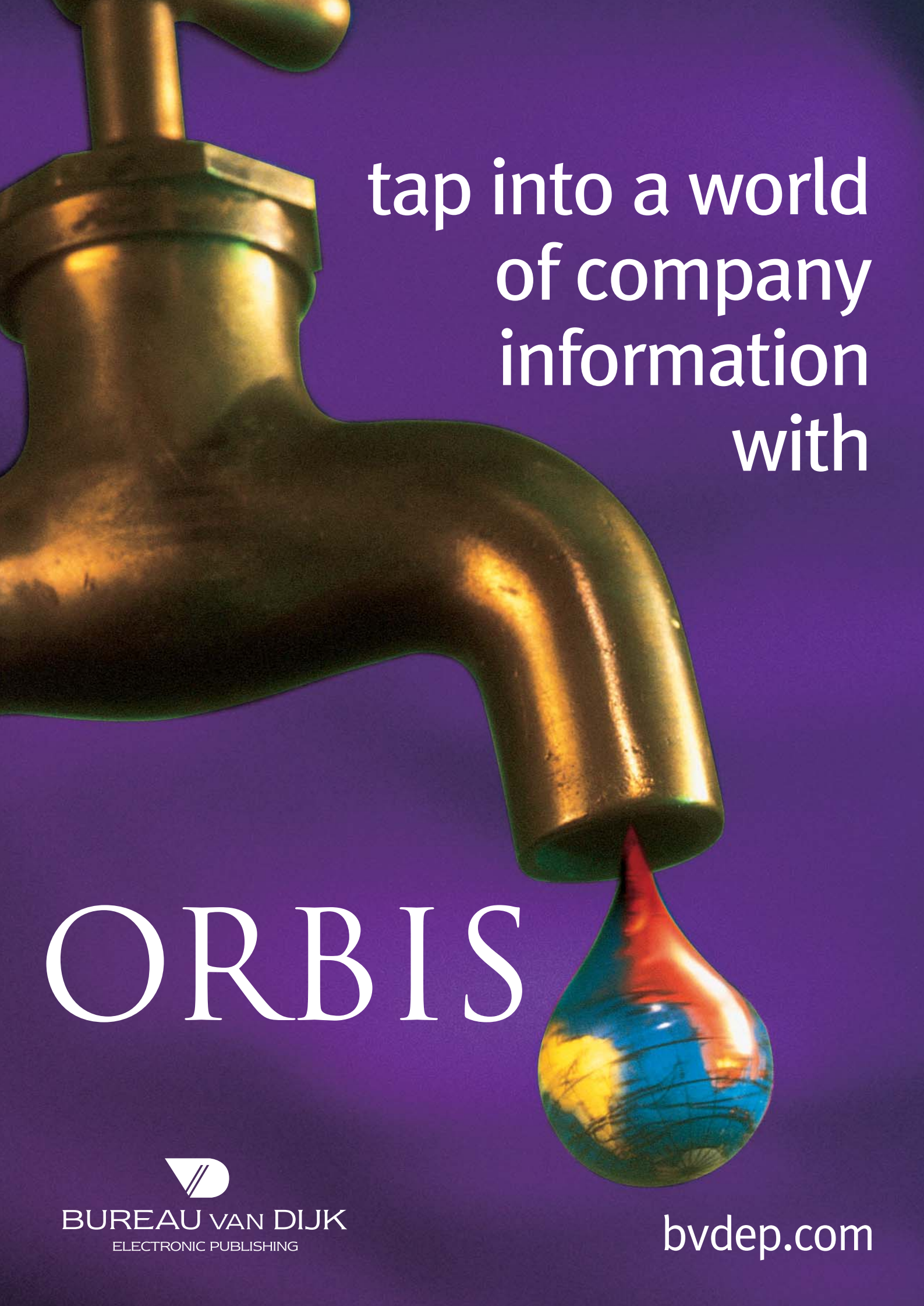
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VIP No.16: Three M&A products compared

This month's VIP includes in-depth reviews of ZEPHYR (M&A, IPO and venture capital deals) and Thomson ONE for Investment Banking (Deals Module), and compares them with CorpfinWorldwide (reviews last month).

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Paula Murdoch is a Records Manager for Instant Library Limited <http://www.instant-library.com> (part of Tribal Group <http://www.tribalgroup.co.uk>) and currently manages a disparate team of information specialists for one of Instant Library's highest calibre clients.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Paula Murdoch

- With the ever increasing annoyance (or downright mayhem) caused by hoax emails, I have found an authoritative source which tells me whether I need to worry: <http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/vinfodb.html> has virus removers, news on the latest hoaxes/real threats and more.
- For checking share prices online for free, use <http://www.quote.com> -- it does exactly what is says on the tin (24hr time lag).
- Need a free information service specific to the information profession? You could give <http://www.bubl.ac.uk> a go. It has an emphasis on our profession and classifies its site links by Dewey among other ways.
- <http://www.nethouseprices.com> - Check out how much houses around you are selling for. Information is taken from the Land Registry.
- And finally, a totally selfish tittle, but my other life when not in the Information Industry is recorded here -- <http://www.bluenation.co.uk> the Birmingham-based band that I play in!

VIP Eye -- now with editorial comment

VIP Eye keeps you up-to-date twice-monthly with announcements in the business information industry.

It now includes comment from editor Pam Foster on emerging trends and significant developments.

See a recent sample and find out about subscribing at:

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FreePint Bar

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Further to my editorial in today's FreePint, it's nice to see information researchers so active in supporting each other at the FreePint Bar over the last couple of weeks. Postings have fallen into two camps: ones about information issues, and ones relating to business and company information. Here's a round-up of the most interesting, or those still requiring assistance.

Can you help locate vendors who provide software to help integrate external content easily, like LexisNexis Web Publisher and Factiva Publisher?

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31698>. For someone wanting to learn research products like Factiva, Bloomberg, Datastream, etc., are there training courses or other ways to gain experience?

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31665>. The latest Jinfo Newsletter has an interesting article on "Lessons learnt from redundancy!" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31656>.

Is there a "generic menu of outputs for a business research unit, such as company report, industry report, news story, etc.?"

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31644>. Do you have experience of tendering for the provision of information resources? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31690>.

What other ways are there of finding out about competitive intelligence (CI) professionals in the US? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31649>.

And is there an easy way to know if something is still in copyright?

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31651>

The 'del.icio.us' social bookmark manager keeps cropping up

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31696> and a long-time FreePinter is looking for pre-beta input to his new calendar-sharing service <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31654>.

On the company information side, there has been a question on sources of information about wealth management in Russia and Poland

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31650>. Can you help someone wanting to move from a CD-Rom company information provider to an online one? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31604>.

Finally, is there a definitive list of IT systems used by government departments?

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31628>. What about a directory of contacts in stock exchanges around the world <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31620>.

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

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

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

Tips Article

"New Librarians and Open Positions: Bringing the Two Together" By Michelle Noel



Michelle Noel is Dean of Library Services for the Vise University Library at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee.

It seems that more and more talk these days, in web circles frequented by recent LIS graduates and those considering library careers, centers on the lack of jobs open to new librarians and the unwillingness of those established in the field to hire next-generation librarians.

Much of the online talk I see focuses on new LIS graduates who want to work at major public and academic libraries in the largest cities in the U.S. and especially in the northeast. While I certainly understand that desire, I would say to those new graduates who are having difficulty finding work: Those of us in other areas of the U.S. need talented young librarians too. Speaking for myself, I welcome new graduates. I generally find them to be energetic, motivated, and inspiring.

When there is a position open in my library, I look for enthusiastic new information professionals who can make a difference to our campus and who will relate well to our population of college students. I find that the enthusiasm of new librarians is contagious and spreads to other staff members. It reaches faculty members, reminding them that we are here and have a valuable service to provide. New librarians, excited by advances in the profession, can bring us closer to providing cutting-edge services to our patrons. In return, those of us with more experience can mentor the next generation of librarians and help prepare them to move up in the field.

However, we cannot hire new librarians if they do not apply for the openings we have. At a recent meeting of several library directors and department heads, from a variety of public and private institutions, three of us were lamenting the lack of applicants for open positions. Two of these positions were at institutions either in a major city or within a half hour of one. One of the three was in a more rural setting. None of us were being deluged by a glut of applicants. Indeed, one of us had received no applications and eventually hired a paraprofessional to fill the position.

One of the complaints I've seen recently in online discussions is that if you work for a smaller institution, there is little room for advancement:

"And once you do find a librarian job, you could end up in my shoes: I've progressed nicely in my job in 5 years as a librarian. So nicely, in fact, that there's basically nowhere to go other than director or assistant director of my library. Director = mid 50s; Assistant Director: early 40s; Me = 30. So I'm looking at 10-20 years before being able to move up, if nothing changes" <<http://www.livejournal.com/community/librarie/s/413148.html>>.

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Events

United Kingdom:

- "Web Creation and Design" 5th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e433>>
- "CMMI Made Practical 5th - 6th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e484>>
- "Free STN workshops in London" 12th - 13th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e463>>
- "Re-designing your Intranet" 13th - 14th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e418>>
- "Data Protection" 13th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e432>>
- "The Library & Information Show" 20th - 21st April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e447>>

United States:

- "Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals" 6th - 9th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e468>>
- "Buying & Selling eContent" 10th - 12th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e460>>
- "2005 AIIP Annual Conference" 14th - 17th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e444>>

Australia and Territories:

- "Dave Snowden: Networking the Organisation" 20th - 21st April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e435>>

Belgium:

- "EUSIDIC Spring Meeting 2005" 17th - 19th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e442>>

France:

- "4th European Conference Research Methodology in Business and Management Studies" 21st - 22nd April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e475>>

Spain:

- "Competia European Symposium 2005" 27th - 28th April <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e449>>

For your free listing, complete the form at <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>>
- Post a message to the author, Michelle Noel, 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/240305.htm#tips>>
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While this may be true, working in libraries in smaller cities and rural areas can be a great place to take a first position and build on your resume, allowing you to apply for higher positions in other libraries.

Equally disturbing are these kinds of comments:

"I don't even have a library job. I looked for over a year (I got my MLIS in spring 2003), and had many interviews and I was always the second choice: they really liked me, but they had to go with someone with more experience" <<http://www.livejournal.com/community/librarians/413148.html>>.

Those in a position to hire should be willing to give those with less experience a chance to prove themselves, especially now, as the older generation wonders who will replace them when they do eventually retire. Not doing so discourages those new to the profession from continuing in the field, and could seriously impact the number of librarians willing to work in and support this profession in the future.

It needs both established librarians and those new to the field to work together to provide a stable employment future for librarians and quality, progressive services for libraries and their patrons.

M&A data sources compared

Need to access M&A data? Uncertain which product to use? The March issue of VIP reviews three of the best known mergers & acquisition products. Compare and contrast the coverage, search options and search results of CorpfinWorldwide, ZEPHYR and Thomson Financial.

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

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- Asperger's syndrome and Autism
- Making archives available through a website
- The 9 Ps of Publishing
- Competitive Intelligence
- User employee abuse of the Internet
- Cross Cultural Management
- Seeking the value proposition for the information professional
- Applying Governance to the Management of Information
- Quality assuring health information resources
- Business Information in Germany

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Penny Leidtke, principal of On-Target Information Services, has over 20 years experience analyzing, researching, and reporting on companies, industries, economic conditions, and financing strategies. On-Target works closely with operating companies, financial services consultants, and law firms on valuations, M&A activities, product development, strategic planning, and industry or economic trend analysis. Recent projects related to various segments of the automotive, insurance, publishing, organic chemicals, healthcare, and extreme sports industries. Articles and presentations have covered starting an information services business, market research methods, and automotive industry resources.

Related links:

- Find out more about this book online at the FreePint Bookshelf <<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/skeptical.htm>>
- Read customer comments and buy this book at Amazon.com <<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/S1N/0910965668/freepint00>>
- "The Skeptical Business Searcher" ISBN 0910965668, published by CyberAge Books.

FreePint Bookshelf

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

"The Skeptical Business Searcher" Reviewed by Penny Leidtke

Today, there is more information available from more sources than ever before. However, we live in a world in which some of that information is incomplete, inaccurate, biased, or intentionally misleading. While on some level we are all aware of these pitfalls, it is a fact of life that bears repeating often.

Robert Berkman, in his new book, "The Skeptical Business Searcher" reminds us of this cold, hard fact and provides us with some of the tools necessary to uncover reliable sources of business information. The book focuses primarily on free or low-cost Web sources, but traditional fee-based information sources are mentioned as well. With Chapter 1 serving primarily as an introduction, the real meat of the book begins in Chapter 2 when Berkman reminds us that there are other, sometimes more effective, ways of beginning our search than by immediately turning to a search engine. In the following chapter, he discusses search engines in general, and Google in particular. He advises that searchers become proficient searching one (he prefers Google) and familiar with several others, some of which are covered here. He also provides some tips to focus your search to help you zero in on more relevant pages.

In subsequent chapters, Berkman tells you what flags to look for to assess the reliability of a given site. He also gives his own opinion of the trustworthiness of the different types of organizations and sources. Company and industry sources, statistics, surveys, news, and other topics are all covered. Finally, Chapter 9 closes out the main body of the book with a list of what the author considers to be some of the best business sites on the Web today, plus a small sample of sites preferred by researchers at Find/SVP.

The book includes two useful appendices and an index. Appendix A contains several checklists that

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

can be useful in evaluating Web sites. Appendix B contains the URLs for those sites mentioned throughout the book under their respective chapter headings along with some additional resources.

"The Skeptical Business Searcher" is an easy read with plenty of examples, anecdotes and even a few case studies. There is also a corresponding Web page with links to the sites and sources recommended in the book at <<http://books.infotoday.com/skepticalbiz>>. This page is periodically updated and amended with additional sources. The book is clearly targeted to the business searcher with a strong, but by no means exclusive, emphasis on U.S. information. However, all searchers can benefit from the tips provided, especially today in the wake of the recent scandals at the New York Times, CBS, and others. Scandals such as these emphasize the need for the proactive approach to research and the development of critical thinking skills that Berkman advocates.

FreePint

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Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners

ISBN: 1-904769-09-8

This report is written for practitioners in jobs focused on, or in roles influenced by, freedom of information legislation.

Focusing on key elements of the legislation and guidance from relevant coordinating authorities in the public sector, the report offers up-to-date and timely advice on the key issues.

The report contains detailed structure and key steps for practitioners to follow.

Key "practitioner action points" are highlighted throughout the text and are presented as a handy reference list at the beginning.

The reader is offered relevant advice and guided to more detailed sources when relevant. Extensively researched, this publication is based on the latest guidance and resources available from the Department of Constitutional Affairs, including fees regulations.



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Steve Wood is a Senior Lecturer in Information Management at the School of Business Information, Liverpool John Moores University. Steve lectures on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes on the subject areas of e-business, information management, knowledge management, content management and freedom of information. He is also responsible for editing and maintaining the popular freedom of information website, "Freedom of Information Act blog" at <http://foia.blogspot.com>. Steve is also founding editor of "Open Government: a journal on freedom of information" <http://www.opengovjournal.org>.

Steve also consults and trains on information management and e-business issues with SMEs and large organisations. His textbook, co-authored with Dave Chaffey entitled "Business Information Management: improving performance using information systems" was published by FT Prentice Hall November 2004. <http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/>. He has also authored another report for FreePint entitled "Information Auditing: a guide for information managers" <http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/infoaudit/>.

Feature Article

"Key issues in complying with Freedom of Information legislation" By Steve Wood

[This article is an introduction to the new in-depth report published today by FreePint: "Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners" <http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>]

Note: Abbreviations used in this article:

- FOIA (2000): Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- EIRs : Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Introduction

"Some Freedom of Information releases will bring with them disobliging headlines for the government. But each and every release will contribute day by day towards our long term vision of a more transparent government in which people feel greater confidence."

Rt Hon Lord Falconer of Thornton, Lord Chancellor, Speech to the Campaign for Freedom of Information, St Bride Institute, London on 1st March 2004.

Previous articles by Paul Pedley (FreePint 5th February 2004 No.153 <http://www.freepint.com/issues/050204.htm>), Steve Wood (FreePint 1st May 2003 no.136 <http://www.freepint.com/issues/010503.htm>) and Richard Wakeford (FreePint 15th March 2001 No.83 <http://www.freepint.com/issues/150301.htm>) have all tracked and discussed the key features of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This article outlines key issues that freedom of information practitioners need to be aware of if they are working directly with or have roles strongly influenced by UK Freedom of Information legislation.

The UK Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 came into force on the 1st of January 2005, an historic day in improving the access to public information for UK citizens. Freedom of Information has generated many headlines; searching the Lexis-Nexis database of UK newspaper articles, we can see that 391 articles in national newspapers featured the words "Freedom of Information Act" between the 1st January and 15th March. A new era of Freedom of Information means new challenges for those charged with developing policies and procedures to comply with the legislation.

UK Freedom of Information legislation

The following freedom provisions are currently in force in the United Kingdom:

- Freedom of Information Act (2000) <http://www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm>

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, anybody may request information from a public authority that has functions in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. The Act confers two statutory rights on applicants: to be told whether or not the public authority holds that information; and, if so, to have that information communicated to them <http://www.foi.gov.uk>

- The Environmental Information Regulations (2004) SI 3391 <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2004/20043391.htm>

The Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) give certain rights of access to environmental information to the general public. The UK has had Environmental Information Regulations since 1992. The new Environmental Information Regulations 2004 came into force on 1st January 2005 <http://digbig.com/4cyfm>.

The EIRs have been updated to bring the UK into line with international requirements, as laid down in EC Directive 2003/4/EC and also in the

Gold

- 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>
- Free Pint 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>
- Free Pint No.83, 15th March 2001. "XML - the DNA of the Internet" and "Freedom of Information" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/150301.htm>
- Free Pint No.58, 16th March 2000. "Portals" and "WWW.OED.COM - A New Home for the Dictionary" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/160300.htm>
- Free Pint 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>
- Free Pint No.10, 19th March 1998. "Working the Net" and "Business and Accounting Resources on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/190398.htm>

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Related FreePint links:

- "Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners", March 2005 <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>
- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>>
- Post a message to the author, Steve Wood, 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/240305.htm#feature>>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

Aarhus Convention. The UK is committed to ratification of the Aarhus Convention.

- Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002 (ASP 13) London, HMSO. <<http://digbig.com/4cyfj>>
The Scottish legislation has some differences to that of the UK, the most important being a test of substantial harm on many of the exemptions. The Scottish Information Commissioner has produced a comparative table that neatly summarises the differences <<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/comparativetable.htm>>.

There is also a non-statutory code of practice for Wales: National Wales Assembly for Wales (2004) Code of Practice on Public Access to Information <<http://digbig.com/4cyfk>>.

Spotlight on fees and charges

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations (2004). SI 3244 <<http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2004/20043244.htm>>. These regulations were published late in December 2004 and posed a big challenge to Freedom of Information practitioners who had to integrate the regulations into their policies and procedures in a matter of weeks. The key features of the regulations are as follows:

The way the fees regulations have been drafted means that the majority of costs for complying with requests will be met by the public sector. The following points outline the key issues related to fees:

- The appropriate limit for costs of compliance for central government is GBP600 and all other public authorities GBP450. If these limits are not breached the request cannot be denied on grounds of cost.

When assessing the costs, the following can be considered by a public authority:

- determining whether it holds the information
- locating the information, or a document which may contain the information
- retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information
- extracting the information from a document containing it

When two or more requests are made by one person or "different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign", the total can be aggregated to one total when assessing the cost of compliance. The requests must also be within working consecutive 60 days and relate to similar information.

A public authority can charge for:

- informing the person making the request whether it holds the information
- communicating the information to the person making the request

A public authority can decide whether to comply with the request at their discretion and charge (taking into account the methods in the regulations) if the appropriate limit is breached.

In most cases, charges will be for photocopying or postage, however, many public authorities have set policies about waiving these charges up to a certain limit.

The impact on UK public authorities

The questions public authorities have been asking about Freedom of Information are:

- What level of risk does FOI pose for our organisation?
- Which parts of the organisations will be effected?
- How will this effect how we manage our information?
- How many requests should we plan for? In the first 6 months? The first year?
- How can we effectively manage the volume of requests?
- How can we use FOI to improve citizen perception of the public authority
- How does FOI relate to other statutory obligations we already have?
- How can we train staff?

In the background material prepared for the 1999 Draft Bill <<http://www.foi.gov.uk/foibg.htm>> research was carried out into assessing the impact of a Freedom of Information Act on UK public authorities. A rough estimate on requests was given:

"The low forecast is based on the experience in Australia and the Republic of Ireland. On their experience we would expect to receive about 45,000 requests per year. The high forecast is based on Canada, which suggests 190,000 requests per year. The figures include applications to national, state (where relevant) and local government."

Five key action points for Freedom of Information practitioners:

Over 20 action points are in the main report published by FreePint, here are five of the key action points:

- Practitioner action point 1: Policies and procedures are required to identify, respond and acknowledge Freedom of Information Act requests when they arrive in your organisation.
- Practitioner action point 2: Assess exemptions as to how they impact on the different functions of your organisation. Assign responsibilities and procedures for applying exemptions.
- Practitioner Action point 3: Practitioners should have systems in place to recognise Freedom of Information Act requests in all formats, encourage applicants to include

relevant information to aid the processing of the request.

- Practitioner action point 4: Develop systems, policies and procedures that enable cost estimation to be carried out fairly and consistently. Compare charging procedures with other authorities in your sector and geographical area.
- Practitioner action point 5: Develop publication procedures and routes for quickly publishing previously made Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests to a relevant class in the publication scheme.

10 essential Freedom of Information resources on the web

- 1. Information Commissioner. Freedom of Information awareness guidance. A series of 29 guidance notes on subjects such as applying the public interest test, applying exemptions and vexatious requests. Expect more to be added during the course of 2005 <<http://digbig.com/4cyfq>>.
- 2. Scottish Information Commissioner (2004) Comparative Table: Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 <<http://www.itspubliknowledge.info/comparativetable.htm>>.
- 3. Department for Constitutional Affairs Freedom of Information website. Official guidance from the department responsible for coordinating freedom of information <<http://www.foi.gov.uk>>.
- 4. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Access to Information pages. Guidance and good practice relating to the Environmental Information Regulations <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/opengov/eir/>>.
- 5. Office of Government Commerce Procurement guidance. Essential guidance on how to deal with contractual issues and commercial confidentiality <<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?docid=1002588>>.
- 6. Freedom Information Forum <<http://www.foi-forum.gov.uk>>. Discussion forum for UK Freedom of Information practitioners hosted by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Registration required.
- 7. Your Right to Know <<http://www.yrtk.org>>. Run by journalist Heather Brooke, the site is updated with many stories about Freedom of Information, often researched by Heather herself. It acts as a companion for her book, also entitled "Your right to Know" published by Pluto 2004 <<http://digbig.com/4cyfr>>.
- 8. Campaign for Freedom of Information <<http://www.cfoi.org.uk>>. Valuable comment and campaigns focused upon effective freedom of information legislation in the UK. The website includes a printer friendly PDF version of the Freedom of Information Act, with book marked sections <<http://www.cfoi.org.uk/pdf/foia2000.pdf>>.
- 9. Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). Freedom of Information resources. Detailed list of web resources <<http://digbig.com/4ckdm>>.
- 10. UCL Constitutional Unit. Publish many useful publication on Freedom of Information and Data Protection <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/foidp/>>.

[This article is an introduction to the new in-depth report published today by FreePint: "Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners" <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>]

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