FreePint®

Contents

About FreePint

FreePint (ISSN 1460-7239) 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 a brief notification when it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.

Editorial

My comments in the last FreePint about the information mix consisting of three elements, namely 'free', 'fee' and 'promotion' <http://www.freepint.com/go/n180>, certainly solicited a few opinions -- not at the Bar, as expected, but directly to me by email.

The idea of promotion -- making money from sponsorship and advertising -- still has some way to go before becoming accepted, especially herein the UK. See this comment to me from a senior business information professional in an investment bank:

"My current feeling is that the promotional aspect is beginning to take over from the content for some things ... [and] that previously hidden agendas of making money are becoming more obvious ..."

Nowhere can you see more evidence of how awkwardly 'promotion' and 'information professional' sit together, than at the conference of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP) in Tucson, Arizona, from which I have just returned.

By its very nature, the AIIP conference attracts information professionals who have struck out alone to start their own business. The first session requires *all* delegates to stand in line, one at a time, and introduce themselves and their business to the conference over the microphone. It daunts the majority of the participants.

I personally think that this session alone justifies travelling 5,000 miles to attend -- it forms the basis for all the connections and contacts you make throughout the conference. There are photos from the conference, including the dreaded 'Member Introductions Session' at <http://www.freepint.com/portal/events/>.

The second week of my American trip was at the annual Factiva Advisory Board in New York. Companies like Factiva are at the other end of the scale: with revenues that small businesses like ours find difficult to comprehend, they are not shy of charging for their services and making money. We must not forget that it is through their support and sponsorship that resources like FreePint are indeed free to the end user.

Indeed, FreePint itself is not a charity, and through a prudent mix of free content, paid content, sponsorship and advertising, we try to make a living. FreePint's sister publication VIP is subscription-based itself and covers only subscription-based products. It has just published an in-depth review of Hoover's <http://www.vivavip.com/>.

I stand by my comments that as long as all participants benefit from our actions (and no one is disadvantaged) then there is no reason to shy away from a new definition of the 'information mix' that includes promotion as a key constituent.

Best regards

William Hann
Founder and Managing Editor, FreePint

e: william.hann@freepint.com
t: 0870 141 7474
i: +44 870 141 7474

Free Pint is a Registered Trademark of
Free Pint Limited ® 1997-2005

FreePint®

JINFO — Jobs in information

The Jinfo service enables you to search for 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 editorial is entitled "So you've got a vacancy?".

To read the latest Jinfo Newsletter and to subscribe to receive it twice-monthly by email, visit <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 only GBP195 <http://www.jinfo.com/recruit/>.

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

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

Jinfo :: Jobs in information
<http://www.jinfo.com/>

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Information Officer
Information Services Section vacancy managing information submission & updating activities of the Clinical Information Management.
Recruiter: SHS International Limited
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3965>

Assistant Information Scientists
A range of prof. information work; enquiries, current awareness, evaluation of new sources, bibliographic work & end-user training.
Recruiter: MI5
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3966>

Researcher
Talented researchers sought to execute online analysis projects for clients, on issues of reputation, CSR, lobbying and activism.
Recruiter: Infonic
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3976>

Internet Research Analyst - 4 or 5 days a week
Advanced Internet research skills, scientific background plus postgrad qualification in information management.
Recruiter: Magus Research
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3978>

Information Manager
Leading six Information Advisers and eight Administrators in the provision of professional document delivery and enquiry service
Recruiter: Health and Safety Executive
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3979>

Information Advisor
Deal efficiently with cataloguing, scanning & abstracting. Provide input using research skills & flair for advising & guiding others.
Recruiter: Health and Safety Executive
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3986>

Assistant Librarian
6wk p/t temp role in healthcare org in Leeds - update dbase and intranet, literature searches, etc - qual librarian, online skills
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3991>

Sector Specialist (Financial Institutions)
Senior Information Officers with industry sector knowledge with experience in investment banking or professional services.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3999>

Information Officer
We are currently recruiting for an Information officer to join our Business information Services department.
Recruiter: PKF
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j4007>

[The above jobs are paid listings]

Three Information Today conferences, Paris, 1-2 June
- WebSearch Academy: Carrying out research on the net?
- Enterprise Search Paris: Developing an internal search capability?
- e-Workplace Collaboration: Implementing collaboration technologies?

For more information and to register:
<http://www.infotoday.com/Paris/>

Hoover's reviewed in April's VIP

Hoover's UK Pro Premium provides a mix of proprietary and D&B data on UK and international companies. Read what VIP has to say about company coverage, searching, and generating lists and reports. This issue also includes the first in a new series of Source Guides:

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

Introducing MINT - a fresh approach to company information from Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing

To register for a FREE trial visit
<http://www.mintbusinessinfo.com>

Companies, news, industry research and directors in a single easy to use information database for research, sales, marketing and business development professionals.

"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.

"Interesting and informative. I would and have recommended the publication to colleagues."

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

VIP Eye :: Analysis of business information news

VIP Eye provides twice-monthly comment and analysis of the latest announcements in business information.

Be the first to find out about new products, key personnel changes, and trends in business information provision.

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

Join **Information Today**

in

Paris!

1-2 June 2005
CNIT La Défense - Paris, France

Information Today returns to Paris in 2005, in conjunction with i-expo, to present three two-day conferences for internet researchers, information managers and IT professionals.

websearch ACADEMY

Enterprise Search *Paris*

Mastering Internet Research

- Recent developments in Web search engines
- Search techniques for serious researchers
- Multimedia search
- RSS, blogs, and news searching
- Specialty search engines

Solving the Findability Dilemna in Your Organisation

- How internal search engines work
- Selecting a search engine
- Using taxonomies and metadata
- Search analytics and log analysis
- Strategies for effective search

Collaboration in the E-Workplace

Strategies, Technologies, People & Culture

- Guidelines for defining a collaboration strategy
- How to deploy and manage collaboration and social networking tools
- How to use weblogs and wikis in a business environment
- How to create a collaborative work environment
- Tips for managing a successful collaboration projects

Organised by

Information Today, Inc. and **Information Today Ltd**   **In conjunction with**   **@expo**

For more information, contact Information Today at paris@infotoday.com
http://www.infotoday.com/Paris/

FreePint

My Favourite Tipples
by David Sarokin

David Sarokin <djs@poboxes.com> is an internet junkie, a Google Answers Researcher, and is available for freelance research.

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

- Hidden Search tool at Yahoo Finance <http://finance.yahoo.com/search> - This hard-to-find search function is a great free tool for quick company research. It searches only the Yahoo Finance company descriptions for search terms, and returns lists, news, financial summaries, and a host of other useful information.

- UMDL Texts <http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx/> - This exceptionally clumsy site is quite simply one of the best history resources on the internet. Thousands of historical documents – none of which show up in search engine results -- are full-text searchable, and can be viewed in either text or original page image format.

- Whois <http://www.whois.sc> - Hands down, the best free whois search tool, especially for generating large lists of all domains that contain a given term, such as [library]; use the "Domain Explorer" tab to get started with your look-up.

- Dialog Intellectual Property <http://openaccess.dialog.com/ip/> - For really deep domain name searches. Searches can be conducted on ownership (find all sites registered to Coca Cola), and can include current (whois) and historic (whowas) records. Searching is free, but there is a charge for the actual records.

- Search Systems Public Records <http://www.searchsystems.net> - This is the best-organized portal for finding online public records on people, companies, governments, etc. Although strongest in its coverage of the US, the site is international, and even includes more than 25 links under the heading "Outer Space".

FreePint Bar
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

I have collected a few postings from the FreePint Bar over the last three weeks - some answered: "Does anyone get interview expenses these days?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31830>; and some not: "Does anyone have an official number of EMEA Companies?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31946>.

FreePint Events has really taken off with 53 listings of events taking place all over the world: UK, Spain, USA, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Belgium, China, Finland and Australia <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31890>.

Know where to find information on the South African teenage market? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31983>. How are business process/administration outsourcing contracts/projects/jobs priced? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31856>

The latest issue of the Jinfo Newsletter is out, with 34 job listings and an editorial from Linda Emmett, Information Manager, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, entitled "So you've got a vacancy?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31925>.

Do you know of a forum or mailing list which will accept copyright queries in the UK? There have been a few suggestions but no definitive resource <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31952>.

Where can a FreePinter find the average tariff rates on imports into the EU and the US? < http://www.freepint.com/go/b31895>. Or how about: "Does anyone know where I might be able to source a list(s) of the vocabulary that each age group should know?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31828>.

What proportion of employers and/or employees in the NHS do and don't have either the legally required written statements of particulars of employment or employment contracts? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31833>.

Finally, why not have a browse by category in the FreePint Bar Browser <http://www.freepint.com/bar/browser/> -- there might be a query you can help with.

If you haven't already subscribed to the free twice-weekly FreePint Bar Digest, then please do so at <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.

Penny Hann <penny.hann@freepint.com>
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

"Distance Learning is Closing the Distance"
By Anne Esler

Anne Esler is a Business and Engineering Librarian at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. She has an MLS degree and MBA degree which was completed completely online.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Education' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p39>

- Post a message to the author, Anne Esler, 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/280405.htm#tips>

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

All it takes is a quick web search using your favorite search engine to find that elearning in the business world is BIG business. The range of results is instructive, from Harvard Business School Publishing elearning solutions, to elearning business models, to certification courses, to jobs with titles such as "eLearning Manager". Distance education is as close as your desktop.

According to Phil Britt in an article entitled "Elearning on the Rise" (published in last November's EContent), companies are using online learning courses to save on costs of keeping their employees up-to- date with new skills and knowledge. The article quotes IDC's figures of solid growth in corporate elearning of 11% per year through 2007 as 90% of organizations with 10,000 or more employees are developing or have developed online learning programs [1].

Almost every industry that you can imagine -- aviation, medicine, banking, insurance -- offer education and training online. Various trade associations, as well as companies, have vast offerings. However, a new model of 'just-in-time learning' is developing, as online learning becomes more integrated within the context of one's job. Jonathon Levy <http://www.JonathonLevy.com>, Senior Learning Strategist at The Monitor Group, discusses this vision as a partnership of the individual's information 'profile' and technological support of databases, search engines and knowledge bases [2]. From this develops a model driven by the individual's need; an employee-driven model of education.

Technological improvements in learning management software open the door to employee-driven education. I have taken several WebEx <http://www.webex.com/> based courses which last for about an hour to learn new database skills. While these courses still rely on using the telephone for the audio portion of the course, one wonders whether the rapid adoption of VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) telephony may make collaborative educational efforts easier.

E-learning can give a competitive advantage to companies whose employees have the ability to tap into training when needed. With compliance issues more in the spotlight, doctors and bankers can keep current with the ever-changing regulatory environment. Medical personnel who require training in the United States regulation, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996), can get up to speed in online certification courses.

Young students across the globe today are growing up with online learning as a natural part of their education. As these students grow and move from the world of school to the world of work, their expectations and skills will naturally complement the 'just-in-time' learning

environment of the corporate world. Peter Drucker's vision of continuous learning has arrived with learning management software to lead today's workers towards not just tomorrow's work environment, but this afternoon's. Perhaps the next obstacle in the evolution of online education courses is to sort through the maze of information to choose a quality program. There are many sites which are good starting places for your research. However, it is important to assess a program carefully for accreditation, overall costs, financial aid or company reimbursement. Be sure that your computer system has the necessary technical requirements.

Check out these websites for more information on online learning for courses, degree and certification programs:

BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/>

Trainingmag.com <http://www.trainingmag.com/training/index.jsp>

VNU Learning <http://www.vnulearning.com/learninggroup/index.jsp>

Distance Education Clearinghouse University of Wisconsin-Extension <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/home.html>

The Educator's Reference Desk <http://digbig.com/4dgbb>

World Wide Learn <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/online-courses/global-education.htm>

GetEducated.com <http://www.geteducated.com/>

[1] ELEARNING on the rise. Britt, Phil, EContent, 15252531, Nov2004, Vol. 27, Issue 11.

[2] Knowledge Warriors, Levy, Jonathon, T+D, Feb2004, Vol. 58 Issue 2, p46, 6p.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles
[Provisional]

- Asperger's syndrome and autism
- 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
- Business information in Germany

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

Why do YOU use DigBig?

"Saves a lot of messing about when wanting to return to the depths of big sites such as BBC." Health and Safety Manager, Northampton, UK (March 2005)

DigBig shortens long URLs and is free to use:

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

Career tips and advice in the Jinfo Newsletter

The twice-monthly Jinfo Newsletter has great articles on getting a job, interviews, dealing with recruiters, etc.

It is free to subscribe and there is a complete archive at:

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

Events

United Kingdom:

- "Managing Intranets and Using Weblogs" 11th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e431>

- "Internal branding for enhanced business performance" 11th - 12th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e495>

- "Untangling Your Web: effective website management" 17th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e430>

- "Private Equity Info Pro Group" 18th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e487>

- SLA EUROPE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR: Making a business case 25th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e489>

United States:

- "Enterprise Search Summit" 17th - 18th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e457>

- "Streaming Media East" 16th - 18th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e474>

- "WebSearch University" 17th - 18th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e459>

- "FOI SOS" 25th - 26th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e450>
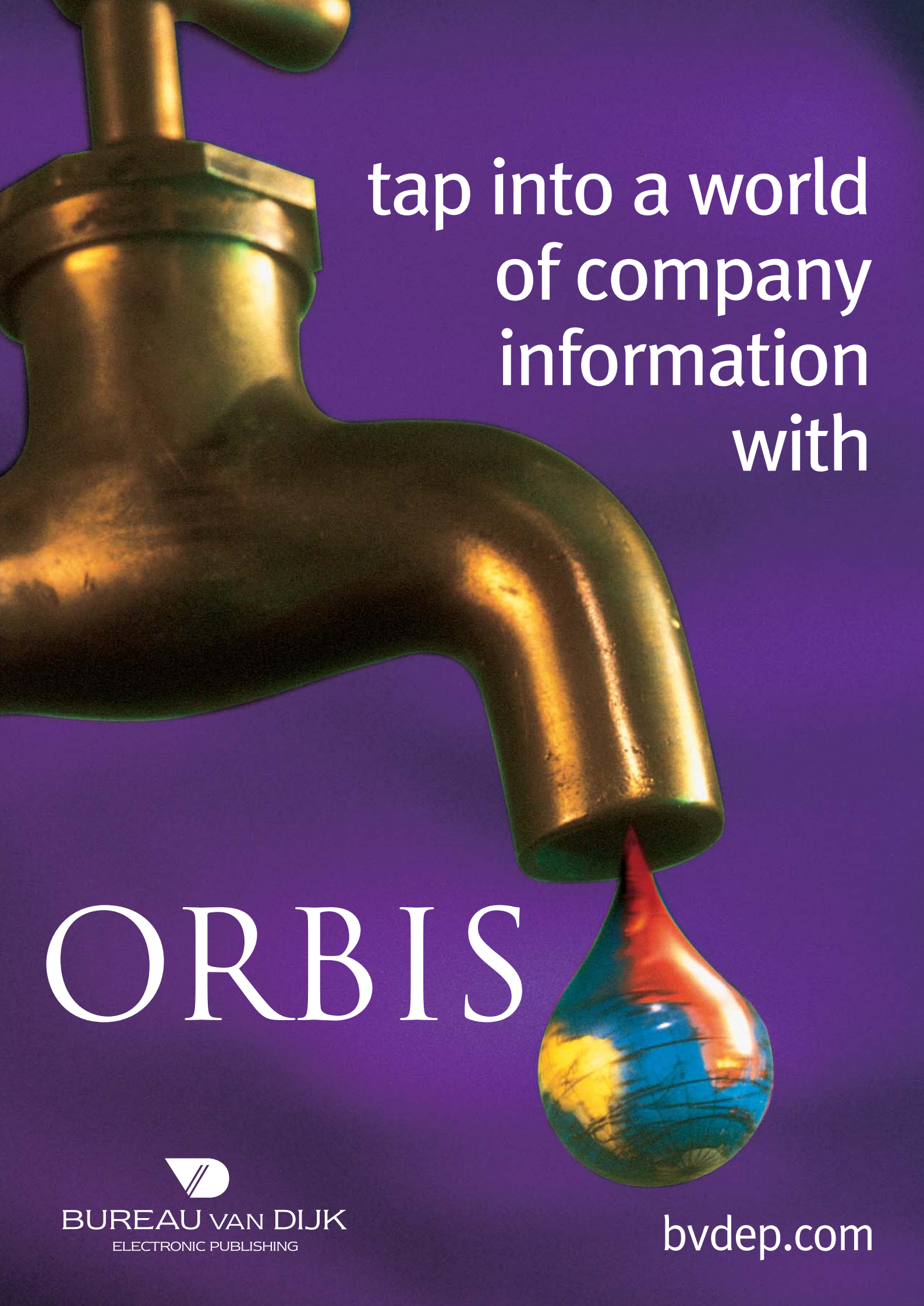
Canada:

- "2005 Wireless & Mobile WorldExpo" 18th - 19th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e465>

Czech Republic:

- "INFORUM 2005 : 11th Annual Conference on Professional Information Resources" 24th - 26th May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e412>

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

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

![FreePint logo]

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

"Practical Copyright for Information Professionals: the CILIP Handbook"
Reviewed by Shivaji Shiva

Shivaji Shiva is a solicitor in the Charity Team at Russell-Cooke Solicitors. He advises a range of not-for-profit organisations including national archives and museums on issues including copyright and data protection.

Related links:

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

- Read customer comments and buy this book at Amazon.co.uk <http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1856044904/freepint0c> or Amazon.com <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1856044904/freepint00>

- "Practical Copyright for Information Professionals: The CILIP Handbook" ISBN 1856044904, published by Facet Publishing

- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the FreePint Bookshelf at <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

Sandy Norman is a freelance copyright consultant. In this handbook, published by CILIP, she aims to demystify the law of copyright and provide practical guidance on dealing with copyright issues. She achieves that aim. The book is easy to use with a sustained focus on issues relevant to library and information professionals, and the organisations they work for. It is written in a manner that allows for quick access to the relevant question for those seeking specific guidance, while providing enough background material to satisfy those who want the reasons behind this guidance.

The book offers a clear exposition of copyright law from copyright basics, to a brief look at the historical context and an outline of relevant international developments. For those inspired to learn more, the final chapter is devoted to sources of further information including a useful survey of the committees and professional bodies active in the field. This chapter also sets out the usual references and recommends further reading.

The handbook has been updated to account for the changes made by the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations Act 2003. There is also a section on illuminating cases from the UK and elsewhere.

To aid focused use by time-pressed information professionals seeking quick reference on specific issues, chapters are divided into sections focusing on particular practical issues. For example, chapter one includes a section setting out the rules for determining first ownership of copyright in different types of material. Chapter two highlights exceptions of particular relevance for information professionals, including sections on permission to copy and the various contexts in which this arises, exceptions particularly relevant to educational establishments, and on copying by and for visually impaired persons. Each chapter ends with a list of 'ten points to remember from

the chapter' which provides a summary and also a useful aide-memoire.

This commonsense approach informs each chapter. Handy tips include a rule of thumb for identifying a 'substantial' part of a work, a checklist of common license terms and similarly helpful comments on the fair dealing exceptions. The book also includes a helpful collection of case studies and frequently asked questions together with responses which are clearly rooted in considerable experience and take a straightforward and pragmatic approach.

The compliance solutions include contractual solutions with an outline of the characteristics of commonly available licenses and an introduction to the key stages involved in negotiating copyright licences.

This book is likely to be a regularly consulted reference volume for library workers, information managers and anyone who manages the use of copyright material and needs an accessible introduction to copyright law. Within the constraints of its 175 pages it provides clearly presented practical guidance to the legal issues that may confront you on a day-to-day basis.

FreePint

Contributors to this issue:

William Hann (FreePint Managing Editor), Penny (FreePint Administrator), Anne Esler, Susannah Ross, Julia Swann, David Sarokin, Shivaji Shiva, Plain Text <http://www.plain-text.co.uk/> (proofreading).

Advertisers/Sponsors of this issue:

PKF, SHS International Limited, Infonic, Magus Research, MI5, HSE, BvD, Information Today, Sue Hill Recruitment, Glen Recruitment, Factiva, Willco, VIP.

© Free Pint Limited 1997-2005

Contact

VIP

VIP

A monthly publication with in-depth reviews of business information products.

VIP Eye

A twice-monthly current-awareness service analysing business information news announcements and trends.

VIP Wire

Search and post press releases about business information products and services (free).

Full details at
www.vivaVIP.com

Recent Reviews:

- Hoover's
- Factiva
- CorpfinWorldwide
- EBSCO
- Business Monitor
- BvD
- Dialog vs. Factiva vs. LexisNexis
- D&B

Forthcoming Reviews:

- ZEPHYR
- SDC
- Emerald
- Mergent
- ISI

freePint®

FreePint is an online community of 70,000 information researchers globally. Membership is free.

FreePint Newsletter

The twice-monthly newsletter contains tips and reviews about online research.

FreePint Bar

Forum for posting tricky Web research questions and contacting other members.

In-depth Reports

Detailed reports on information management topics.

Find out more at
www.FreePint.com

FreePint Newsletter

Complying with Freedom of Information legislation: a guide for practitioners

Jinfo Jobs in information

Jinfo (pronounced 'Jin-fo') is *the* place to find and advertise jobs in the information industry.

The Jinfo Newsletter contains advice from recruitment consultants and a list of the latest vacancies in Jinfo.

Search jobs, advertise and subscribe at
www.Jinfo.com

Recent Articles:

- "So You've Got the Interview"
- "First impressions do count?"
- "The Importance of a CV"
- "What Are You Reading?"

Recent Job Titles:

- Researcher
- Part Time Internet Research Analyst
- Business Researcher (Human Resources)
- Regional Sales Manager
- Performance & Research Officer

digbig

DigBig is a free service that shortens long Web addresses (URLs) to make them easier to communicate.

You simply paste in a long URL and it gives you a much shorter one back.

Try it out at
www.DigBig.com

Testimonials

"Absolutely indispensable, especially for links from map sites and long newspaper URLs. Brilliant for adding links to discussion group forums."

Information Officer, North London, UK

"Extremely useful when sending links to clients - looks very professional."

Research Manager, Manchester, UK

Feature Article

"Using A Website To Open Up The Archive"
By Julia Swann and Susannah Ross

Julia Swann and Susannah Ross run a website consultancy called Select Ideas <http://www.selectide as.co.uk/consult>.

You will find the Newcomen Society for the study of the history of engineering and technology at <http://www.newcome n.com>.

Somcom <http://www.somcom. co.uk> specialises in producing electronic archives.

Julia is the author of a forthcoming book on building databases. Susannah is the author of A Simple Guide to Writing for Your Website (ISBN 013041557X Prentice Hall 2001) <http://www.selectide as.co.uk/ross/sguide.ht m>.

Declaration of interest: Julia's husband, Dick Swann, is Executive Secretary of the Newcomen Society.

When people say "It's all on the Web now", the response is usually "Yes, but only if you can find it". In quite a few cases, the response would be "No it's not; it's still in leatherbound books on our shelves!" This article is about how the Newcomen Society <http://www.newcomen.org.uk>, a learned society dedicated to the history of engineering and technology, made its archive of fascinating research papers available through its website and at the same time attracted new members and created a welcome new source of income for the Society.

75 volumes: 1,000 papers

The Society's Transactions, containing research papers about topics as varied as windmills, railways and vacuum cleaners, date back to 1920. Although all today's volumes are originated in electronic form and copies of recent volumes are available, until recently anyone who happened to know of the existence of a paper in one of the early volumes had to ask the Society to make a photocopy. These early volumes, some of them finely bound and long out of print, were becoming somewhat battered. Fortunately, a legacy from a member offered an opportunity both to preserve the Society's archive and to make it available to a wider audience through the Web.

Making electronic copies and a database

The volumes were unstitched and each page scanned. All 75 volumes of the Transactions are now in electronic form on a CD, which is used as the master copy for any printouts, thus preserving the fragile originals for posterity. This first part of the job was undertaken by a firm of specialists, Somcom. The second part of the job, also successfully completed by Somcom, was to mount the papers on the Web and provide a database with search facility together with an online payment system.

All available now?

It's a common misconception that once an archive is in electronic form and available online, it will be found by anyone using a search engine. What people forget is that the search engine robots will not usually be able to gain access to data in a database - especially valuable data that is supposed to generate income for its owners. To gain access to the Newcomen Society's data, the robots would need to formulate the same queries as a human being (and then get out their credit or debit cards!) The consequence was that the papers were still really only available to those who already knew how to find the site and who, once there, queried the database and then chose to buy papers in their particular area of interest. For example, anyone who typed "davy lamp" into a search engine would not be directed to the relevant paper, as the keywords would remain hidden in the database.

Enter the website

This is where the website came in. The role of the Society's main website is to draw in visitors who are not aware of the existence of the Society or its website but are interested in the subject. This website, like so many other Societies' sites, was originally seen as a way of informing existing members of forthcoming meetings, visits and events, and of providing them with other useful information. It was not generating visits by non-members, unless they had already heard of the Newcomen Society, nor was it being used to show off the Society's main asset - its splendid research papers.

Using the table of contents

The next task was to get all the titles of the papers up on the Web in a form that would be

attractive to the search engines. The table of contents, listing all the papers in the Transactions, was scanned, converted to machine-readable text (OCRd) and then mounted on the web as an HTML file. This, however, was far too big and slow to load and needed to be split into manageable chunks.

A mini-database behind the scenes

By importing the OCRd table of contents into an Access database, it was possible to search and sort it in many different ways. Thus it could be presented in smaller quick-loading files, selected alphabetically by author (A-C, D-E, F-H etc.). Fortunately many of the titles were quite long and descriptive, containing a wealth of useful keywords, so almost instantly the traffic to the website increased.

Presenting the information better

A list of titles by authors A-C is not the most attractive or usable page to present to casual visitors to your website. Given the database of titles, it was not a huge job to search on various keywords and collect together titles on various themes, such as canals, bridges, steam engines, mills and electronics, and to produce a separate Web page for each theme. This also had the advantage of producing pages with greater keyword density: for example the word "mining" might occur eight times on a themed page, as opposed to once or twice in the alphabetical list of authors. And a list of papers on one topic makes a more interesting menu for the casual visitor than a list of titles by author.

Advertising your wares

The casual visitor, interested in canals for example, may well be pleased to see a list of titles of research papers on canals, but lists still make rather dry reading. For this reason - and to give a taste of what is in the archive - a handful of papers were picked out and written up in 'highlights', which could be found via quick links on the home page. This was rather laborious work (though quite good fun), as it involved browsing through the archive, reading a few papers quite carefully, selecting some lively passages with good illustrations, and wrapping each excerpt around with some useful context.

Search engines love depth

The result of the 'highlights', measured by log analysis and the number of requests for full copies of the original papers, has been quite dramatic. The reason that these pages are being found so easily is, once again, keyword density. But with excerpts rather than just titles, the keywords can be much more specific. For example, whereas the term "Mulberry harbours" appears only once in the themed list of titles, in the excerpt it appears several times, as do other related keywords. So visitors who have typed in "Mulberry rafts", "Churchill + Mulberry" or "Mulberry floating breakwaters" are also directed to the Society's website because all the additional words occur in the excerpt.

It works!

An excerpt from the paper titled "Beauvais Cathedral" has been found regularly by search terms as broad as "cathedral structure", "gothic cathedral engineering" and "nave collapsed", on top of all the searches that included the word "Beauvais". In a recent application for membership, the answer to the question "How did you hear of the Newcomen Society?" was "website article on Beauvais Cathedral" - proof that presenting highlights like this really works.

Topicality helps

While Mulberry harbours and cathedrals seem to be of perennial interest, the popularity of other topics may be more fleeting. The highlight on the 'Big Stink' of 1858 was particularly popular at the time of a television programme on Sir Joseph Bazalgette, who designed London's sewers. This was pure luck, but it would be clever to anticipate this sort of opportunity by looking out for anniversaries (such as Brunel's bicentenary in 2006 <http://www.brunel200.com>), and coming television programmes, films or books, and having relevant excerpts ready.

Extra breadth

Another substantial increase in traffic happened as an unexpected result of a quite separate initiative. The index to the earliest 32 volumes of Transactions had long been out of print, and two kind volunteers laboriously scanned and OCRd the remaining library copy so that it could be made available as a free download from the website in PDF. Because the index lists the full range of keywords in the papers in the volumes, this PDF file presents a concentration of yet more useful words and phrases that could bring searchers to the site.

Again, it works!

Originally intended as a way of directing members to the right volume of Transactions, the index - even though it was a PDF file and a big one at that - was acting as a very successful magnet, attracting on average 40 hits per day. For example, someone recently searched for information about the "Whitefriars glass furnace"- a fairly specific and esoteric query. The search engines would not have found it in the database, nor in the list of titles, nor in any of the excerpts. It was the juxtaposition of these three keywords in the index that enabled the searcher to find the website and, we hope, the relevant paper in the archive.

We've tried to show that using a website to open up the archive involves not just the technicalities of converting documents to electronic format, but finding ways of presenting information in a way that is interesting and helpful to the user and makes sense to the search engines.