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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 really like things that help you maintain a sense of perspective. It's all too easy when you've got a lot on your plate (as most of us have) to forget the bigger picture. A few things have reminded me recently about the insignificance of daily troubles.

Firstly, I'm finally finishing Bill Bryson's excellent book "A Short History of Nearly Everything". The book's tone of schoolboy awe at the leaps in understanding the world around us is infectious.



Bryson makes unimaginable things imaginable; or, at the very least, vaguely comprehensible and memorable. For instance, I now know that an atom is the size of a millimetre-long line being cut into ten thousand segments, each of which is cut into another ten thousand segments. As for the size of an atom's nucleus: if you think of the atom (most of which is like a cloud of gases) as the size of a cathedral, then the nucleus would be the size of a fly inside that cathedral.

Like Bryson's ability to describe the very large and the very small, I've always loved those animations (usually in the movies) which start in outer space and then zoom right in to a city or a specific building. So I've been in my element using Google Earth -- being able to fly around the world, zoom in and out, and even 'tilt' to see certain terrain or buildings. It's quite humbling and worth a look.

Finally, it was great to watch this week's launch of the space shuttle Discovery. I held my breath as the solid rocket boosters were successfully jettisoned when the craft reached 3,000 miles an hour. There are some interesting resources about the launch on ResourceShelf <<http://digbig.com/4eccy>>, which continues to be extremely informative, with new postings every day of the week.

On the theme of moving from the very big to the very small, today's FreePint looks at how search engines are focussing in on the development of their local search offerings. We also cover some resources to help with writing plain and clear English, by a Canadian working in Ukraine.

We hope you enjoy today's FreePint. Don't forget that different versions of this newsletter are available online, including a fully formatted full colour version in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/>>. You can modify your account to receive that version by email, or encourage your colleagues to set up their own subscription, at <<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>>.

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Jinfo :: Jobs in information

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

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 " Time to plan the induction programme ".

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:

European Information Specialist - Maternity Cover

An international executive search firm based in London is seeking a researcher to join the information services team.

Recruiter: Spencer Stuart
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4222>>

Internet Researcher

AQA (Any Question Answered) is looking for internet researchers to help stamp out question marks. Flexible hours, work from home.

Recruiter: IssueBits Ltd
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4224>>

Information Services Manager

Exceptional individual with proven track record in successful team management required by Law firm.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4250>>

Part Time Professional Archivist

A charity based in Victoria is seeking a Professional Archivist for a job share role of 15 - 20 hours a week.

Recruiter: D A Solutions Ltd
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4256>>

Information / Knowledge Co-ordinator

Recent Library/Information graduate? Exc. opportunity to combine research and K.M. skills in friendly Central London consultancy.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4262>>

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 42 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter

<<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>> and over 80 in the Jinfo database <<http://www.jinfo.com/>>.

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

- **JOB SEARCHING** -- Free search and sign up to the Jinfo Newsletter.
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Download your copy at <<http://www.factiva.com/ads/2005/freepint715>>

VIP scoops OneSource products

The July issue of VIP contains the first ever reviews of OneSource's new products for the UK and US SME sectors. A further review examines the data in Global Business Browser: Europe, following OneSource's new partnerships with European information providers.

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

Reward good customer service :: nominate a vendor today

This is your chance to reward excellence by nominating the online information vendor who, in your opinion, has provided you with outstanding customer service.

Cast your vote for this year's "Online Information / FreePint Award for Best Customer Service Team":

<<http://www.freepint.com/events/online-info-2005/>>

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Would you like to write a report? <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>

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A full archive of FreePint Newsletters is freely available online, alongside fully formatted editions of the newsletter. These are printable, and include photos of the authors and colour advertising. Check out the archive and have selected issues emailed to you:

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

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Searching the free web, but not finding, costs U.S. companies more than \$31 billion a year in wasted time.* That's because more than half of all searches are not successful.

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*Source: Find/SVP



My Favourite Tipples

by Sadri Saieb

- As legal librarian in charge of the periodicals and reference service, I am continually impressed by the work of John Doyle at Washington & Lee Law School for his Most-Cited Legal Periodicals <http://law.wlu.edu/library/mostcited/index.asp>
- I am also a fan of the work of Bernard Hibbitts and his team for the very up-to-date JURIST <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/>.
- For free and fast access to law, WorldLII <http://www.worldlii.org/> is a wonderful collaborative project of several legal information institutes.
- To check legal references and abbreviations used in periodicals, I use the brilliant and exhaustive Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations <http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/>.
- Recently, came across a simple and clever interface for electronic periodicals at the University of New Brunswick <http://www.lib.unb.ca/eresources/e-Journals.php>.

Sadri Saieb is a reference librarian at the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law <http://www.isdc.ch/>

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

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FreePint Bar

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There must be lots of FreePinters on holiday at the moment as there have been quite a few questions posed in the last two weeks that remain unanswered. So, for all those left behind in the office, take a look at the postings below and see if you know any of the answers.

Do you know when printed works in the UK are in the public domain - is there a cut-off date? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32720>. Or perhaps you know if the classified ads in newspapers are copyright? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32645>.

Is there a directory which lists the number of embassies for each country? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32656>. What about a list of agricultural dealers <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32632> or sources of UK management consultant firms? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32704>.

After the knowledge management article published in the last issue of FreePint <http://www.freepint.com/issues/140705.htm>, there has been an interesting discussion on the definition of 'SME' in different parts of the world <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32631>.

The latest edition of the Jinfo Newsletter has been published with a tips article on creating an induction programme <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32680>.

A graduate is trying to find the definition of a 'communications manager' <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32629>. Do you think it matters if a freelance researcher relocates to France? What will her clients think? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32678>.

Any ideas where this saying come from: "to show the dog the rabbit"? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32707>.

One FreePinter needs various solutions for office emails <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32624> and another wants to find out what a laptop's wi-fi range is <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32689>. Do you know how long laser printing lasts? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32673>.

It has been busy at the Student Bar too:

Ideas are needed for dissertations on auditing accounting <http://www.freepint.com/go/s4445> and attention-grabbing techniques for websites <http://www.freepint.com/go/s4435>.

Can you help a business studies degree student find information on Heinrich von Pierer, ex-CEO of Siemens? <http://www.freepint.com/go/s4382>.

Congratulations to Frank Cottrell Boyce who has won the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2004 for his book 'Millions' <http://www.vivavip.com/go/w754>. Do you have a press release you would like post? <http://web.vivavip.com/forum/Wire/>.

That's it for now, until next time.
Penny Hann, FreePint

penny.hann@freepint.com



What is Jinfo?

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies.

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

Search the latest jobs at www.jinfo.com

Jinfo Newsletter

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

Subscribe for free at:
www.jinfo.com/subs/



Recent Articles:

- "CV Writing Tips"
- "Networking"
- "So now you have to choose some one"
- "Asking for feedback"
- "Putting No.1 First"
- "So you've got a vacancy?"
- "Do You Have any Questions?"
- "Lessons learnt from redundancy!"
- "Taking time out"
- "So You've Got the Interview"
- "First impressions do count?" "So now you have to choose some one"

Read these articles and others at:
www.jinfo.com/newsletter/

Recent Job Titles:

- Records Management & Information Compliance Adviser
- Corporate Finance Researcher
- Librarian/Archivist
- Corporate Finance Researcher
- Assistant e-Librarian
- Junior Researcher
- Records Manager
- Records Co-ordinator
- Graduate Information Trainee
- Researcher

Search the database and find out about advertising vacancies at:

www.jinfo.com

Tips Article

"Plain and clear: Resources on Plain English" By Vasyl Pawlowsky



Canadian Vasyl (Bill) Pawlowsky has spent the last six years in Ukraine. Since January of 2003 he has headed Information Services at the Kyiv-based Law Firm Magister & Partners <<http://www.magisters.com/>>. During the first two years he consulted on democracy development issues, and continues to consult for a number of NGOs. Having worked in journalism for a year and a half, and being well connected in various circles, he facilitated international media during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and continues to act as a media fixer whenever possible. Currently he is developing an international music project, but can't tell us what it is yet.

It was not by chance that I have decided to write on this topic, which I believe is important both in the industry in which I work, and for business communication in general. Working in a Kyiv-based law firm, we have to deal with documentation in Ukrainian and Russian, and also in English, as our clients are not only domestic but also international firms.

On a regular basis many of our employees come to me (one of only two native speakers in our firm) seeking advice on translation, grammar and syntax. One day I was approached to help with the translation of a clause in a contract, which read as follows:

"Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, no remedy hereunder or with respect hereto which may be available to any Party hereto is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy available to such Party and every such remedy shall be cumulative and in addition to every other remedy available to such Party. If circumstances, facts or events are covered by several clauses of this Agreement and its Annexes, which are not the same or do not foresee the same consequences therefore, this shall not be construed as an ambiguity, but rather as independent claims, rights or obligations under each Clause, provided, however, that under no circumstances shall this result in losses or damages being recovered fully or partially twice".

I asked a couple of my firm's lawyers: "Is it completely clear what the clause means?". I could never get a quick response, many took a great deal of time trying to understand the English, let alone translate it into Ukrainian.

It was not long before I realized there must be an easier and clearer way of writing whatever this clause was supposed to mean. I started searching how to clarify it and this led me to all kinds of resources on the use of plain language.

Plain and simple

One of the first online resources I came across was the Plain Language Association International's website <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/>>. Not only does this site provide its visitors with a better understanding of why things should be written using plain language, but one can easily find plenty of articles by advocates about using plain language in general and, more specifically, on plain legal writing.

The first stop of the tour in this site is the article entitled 'An Introduction to Plain Language' by Cheryl Stevens <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/stephens/intro.html>>. It quickly gives one a clear understanding of what plain language is, but by taking a step back up the path of the URL <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/stephens/>>, there are three other sections all equally

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

useful: Building Plain Language from the Ground Up, Other Articles, and Design Issues.

Besides the introduction to what plain language is all about, the site provides a fair amount of comic relief on its sample page <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Samples/>>. With one of my favourites of a rewrite into plain English being the following piece about an electronic toll system:

"Before:

Make sure that the account holder's name on the account is the same as the name of the customer to whose account the transaction should be attributed.

After:

Make sure that this account is for the right customer".

After reading much of the material directly on the site, I decided to follow some of the suggested sites in order to see if I could find a way to write the aforementioned paragraph in a much clearer way in order that my translator could render it into understandable Ukrainian.

Handbooks and the heavy hitters

Upon visiting the site it became fairly clear who the heavy hitters are in advocating the use of plain language; many of them are either involved in education, the government, are lawyers or judges. In fact, many governments have made it policy to provide materials written in plain language. Some of the following handbooks are freely available and are both informative and useful guidelines for writing in plain language:

* A Plain English Handbook - How to create clear SEC disclosure documents

<<http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf>> * Plain Language: A Handbook for Writers in the U.S. Federal Government

<<http://www.lauchmangroup.com/PDFfiles/PLHandbook.PDF>> * How to write clearly from the European Commission's Translation Service fight the FOG campaign

<<http://europa.eu.int/comm/translation/en/ftfog/booklet/fog.pdf>> * Ten free guides prepared by the Plain English Campaign in the U.K.

<<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/guides.html>>

While these handbooks are a great place to start, articles on the topic are equally informative and

Related FreePint links:

- 'Publishing' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p185>
- Post a message to the authors, Vasyl Pawlowsky, 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/280705.htm#tips>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>
- 'Publishing' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p185>
- Post a message to the authors, Vasyl Pawlowsky, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

thought-provoking. One of the individuals who can convince anyone that plain language is the way all documents should be written, is Professor Joseph Kimble. Many of his works are available at <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/kimble/>> and I have used many of his works convincing management at our firm to provide a course on plain legal English for our lawyers. His works often appear in the The Scribes Journal of Legal Writing <<http://www.scribes.org/publications.html#scribe>>, a publication of The American Association of Writers of Legal Subjects <<http://www.scribes.org>>.

However, Professor Kimble is not the only one whose articles are great guidelines: Judge Mark Painter not only contributes to Scribes but many of his articles appeared in The Ohio Lawyer's Weekly in a column entitled "The Legal Writer" and are available in full text in the publications section of his website <<http://www.judgepainter.org/publications.htm>>. Together with Professor Kimble, Judge Painter and countless others have taken on a world where writing remained archaic and, for the most part, incomprehensible. The idea of writing is to communicate an idea, instruction, or explanation to an intended audience clearly. While this is not intended to be a complete listing of all the possible resources, on plain English, these, together with the people involved in this movement, have helped me understand the issue at hand and dozens of sites are available at <<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Resources/websites.html>>.

Clearing things up

After reading many of the articles in the resources provided above, I was still not much further ahead than when I had started on my quest. I thought I would head back to the web and continue my search further. It was then that I came across Clarity, "a worldwide group of lawyers and interested lay people." Its aim is "the use of good, clear language by the legal profession". Their website at <<http://www.adler.demon.co.uk/clarity>> provided yet another great resource, but still no answer.

I have always advocated the view that the Internet is much more than the resources made available via the WWW, it's really about the people who are connected. So I went back to where I had started from at the Plain Language Association's website, and hit the Feedback link. I figured that within this network of people I was bound to find someone who could help me with a re-write of the alphabet soup I was given by one of our translators.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles

[Provisional]

- Mentoring
- Asperger's syndrome and autism
- Workplace health promotion
- The future of the profession
- The 9 Ps of publishing
- User employee abuse of the Internet
- Cross-cultural management
- Business information in Germany
- The Slow Movement
- International education resources
- Competitive intelligence
- Online databases
- Government metadata and taxonomy standards

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>>.

Well, I was right; within a relatively short time I received an e-mail from someone at from Legal Secretaries International <<http://www.legalsecretaries.org/>>, with a re-write of what I had started with. As it turned out, the "mess" that I had was something that looked like a "validity" clause to the person who had written to me and a standard one could be worded as follows:

"Validity. If any provision of this Agreement is declared or determined by any court to be illegal or invalid, the validity of the remaining parts, terms, or provisions will not be affected and any part, term, or provision so found to be illegal or invalid will be deemed separate from and not a part of this Agreement".

Now that was a whole lot easier to understand. I sent it to my translator whose reply was, "Now I can translate that! It's plain and comprehensible!".

While the answer was not easily found on the resources above, they, together with the people who contribute and advocate the use of plain language, were of great assistance in tackling the problem at hand. Besides, the question I had posed turned up a little surprise: someone with the same family name as mine, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, wrote to me to see if we were somehow related. We still haven't figured it out if there is a family connection, but we do know a lot of people in common.

Online Information / FreePint Award for Best Customer Service Team

Which online information vendors offer high quality customer service?



Efficient and receptive customer facing account teams can considerably enhance online information products. Some vendors offer superb customer service initiatives which deserve recognition, and others should be encouraged to follow their lead.

This is your chance to reward excellence by nominating the online information vendor who, in your opinion, has provided you with outstanding customer service. Please nominate your choice using the link below and choose from the list of exhibitors at Online Information 2005.

These are some of the questions that you should consider when rating customer service:

- Is the online service technically robust?
- Does it provide easy help and support that is available when required?
- How much support do you receive with implementation and training?
- Do vendors meet you halfway & offer licences to suit your organisation?

The winner will be announced at the Awards Dinner on Wednesday 30 November 2005. Previous winners are Factiva, Xrefer & STN Agency UK.

Make your nomination today at:
www.freepint.com/events/online-info-2005/

Thank you for taking part.
*Olivia Freeman, Award Judge
Trainer & Information Consultant*

FreePint Bookshelf

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

"Business Information Management: Improving Performance Using Information Systems" Reviewed by Patricia Daze



Patricia Daze works as a Business Systems Analyst and Project Manager in the Information Management group of a network communications company in Canada. Her previous experience includes work as a corporate librarian. An avid reader of non-fiction, she can be contacted at pgdaze@yahoo.com.

Related links:

"Business Information Management: Improving Performance Using Information Systems " ISBN 0273686550, published by FT Prentice Hall.

- Read customer comments and buy this book at [Amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0273686550/freepint0c) <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0273686550/freepint0c>> or [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) <<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0273686550/freepint00>>

'Business Information Management' is an undergraduate-level student textbook.

When I first cracked open the cover, I was very impressed with the book's design. An illustrated tour of the contents, multiple chapter summarizations, topics linked to related areas in the book, the colour-coding, and even the astute selection of chapter header illustrations all contributed to ease of navigation and comfort in the book's environment.

The intent of the text is to introduce current concepts and state-of-the-art on managing information in all its views, not just technology. The content is divided into four sections: Introduction; Strategy; Implementation; Management.

Two chapters in the Introduction provide a broad overview of corporate software and hardware. The Strategy section contains a chapter each on Information Management Strategy, Knowledge Management Strategy and Information Systems Strategy - outlining the relationships among them and how they map into organizational strategy. The Implementation section looks at Managing Information Systems Projects, Managing Change, and Building an Information Architecture. The final section explores Information Quality, Information Services Quality, and Ethical and Business Issues.

The preface states that this text is useful for practicing business managers as well as students, and it is with that point of view that I read the book. The content is well anchored in today's business reality, touching on every key area, with the scope and depth of theory perfect to apply in the organization. For each topic, there is a consistent and accurate focus on issues managers face. The list of further resources and websites given in each chapter make it easy to delve deeper into any topic of interest to the student. The Glossary and Index are excellent. It was effortless for me to find content relevant to my own work.

FreePint

Contributors to this issue:

William Hann (FreePint Managing Editor), Penny Hann (FreePint Administrator), Duncan Parry, Vasyi Pawlowsky, Sadri Saieb, Patricia Daze, Plain Text <<http://www.plain-text.co.uk/>> (proofreading).

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DigBig: Long URLs are no longer a problem

DigBig is a fast and free way to shorten long URLs. This makes them much easier to communicate:

"Really useful service, especially when compiling lists of online resources. The automatic clipboard feature is great and saves even more time. Thank you DigBig." Training Consultant, Nottingham, UK (July 2005)

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

Case studies, "research insights", and activities provide real-world examples and build on specific topics described in the text. The activities are excellent distillations of questions that are frequently encountered in the corporate context. The tasks to summarize key concepts into a single sentence reflect what one might need to do in a boardroom discussion or presentation.

The book's companion website, <<http://www.booksites.net/chaffey>>, contains student resources for each chapter including multiple-choice questions, flashcards, and web links from the book. Author Dave Chaffey maintains a supporting blog with additional links to new resources. The website includes the author's "Smarter Internet Searching Guide", an introductory guide to using the web to find information, with a strong endorsement of Google.

The book is UK-centric, as expected for a textbook written for a specific market audience, with samples, models and frameworks predominantly referencing the UK or European versions. This text is worthy of expansion to an international edition. Typos throughout the text and a small number of incorrect figure labels detracted from the reader experience, especially on sections about data quality! Something to remedy in the next edition.

Overall, this book is an excellent student textbook relevant to today's Information Management landscape, and also valuable for practitioners as a reference handbook of current standards, frameworks, and models applied to Information Management.

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Information Manager, UK

Feature Article

"Local Search, The Search Engines and Yellow Pages"

By Duncan Parry

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Back in April 2004 <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/150404.htm#tips>> I wrote about the work of the search engines to develop local search technology. This technology is maturing and beginning to offer useful search results to the public and advertising opportunities for businesses who serve a local area. In this article I'll outline some of the local search tools available today, some of the advertising opportunities and speculate on future developments.

Why The Search Engines Are Going Local

The idea of searching for local businesses online is nothing new; Internet Yellow Pages (IYPs) websites like SuperPages.com <<http://www.superpages.com/>> in the US and Yell.com <<http://www.yell.com/>> in the UK has been around since the 1990s. Unfortunately, the interfaces of many early IYP websites left a lot to be desired, forcing users to browse through multiple pages to reach business listings and lacking search boxes.

So why are the search engines investing time and money in local search now? Three reasons: money, competition and technology.

Money

The printed Yellow Pages market in the US is worth over USD 12 billion (Simba Information, 2002) and increasingly consumers are searching online for local businesses - up to 25% of commercial searches have a local element according to a survey by The Kelsey Group <<http://www.kelseygroup.com/>> and Bizrate.com <<http://www.bizrate.com/>>.

In December 2003, The Kelsey Group estimated local search could be worth USD 2.5 billion by 2008. The search engines have already attracted thousands of national advertisers to the pay per click (PPC) advertising that appears under the heading "Sponsored Results" or similar. Now they want a share of the Yellow Pages advertising market as budgets shift online. Unsurprisingly, this has spurred on the traditional Yellow Pages companies to raise their online game, offering new online advertising options, improving their websites and in some cases partnering with the search engines.

Competition

Search engines have to innovate - they are involved in a two-way arms race with their competitors and with unscrupulous website owners who manipulate search results for commercial gain. The search engines must produce better, more relevant results to compete for the loyalty of the online public. If they stop, they die - before Google, AltaVista was *the* search engine to use, but lost its way and focused on providing every service on its own website (the infamous "portal" strategy). They neglected the relevance of their search results and Google entered the market with a clean website and better relevance. The rest is history.

So if a search engine makes it easier to find local businesses, they can please their existing users - and attract new ones. The engines need to compete for advertisers too, and many national businesses are already advertising with PPC networks, including: Google AdWords <<http://www.google.com/ads>>, Overture (now called Yahoo Search Marketing Solutions <<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/>> in the USA) and Miva <<http://www.miva.com/>> (formerly Espotting in Europe and FindWhat in the USA). So the next source of advertiser dollars is local businesses.

Technology

A revolution has taken place driven by Overture, Miva and Google; search, once viewed as a loss leader (a way of getting people to search engines so they would click on banner adverts or pay for services) has become a revenue stream in itself. And what a revenue stream; Yahoo! bought Overture for USD 1.63 billion.

So the (pay per click) technology to 'monetise' search is already available and the search engines know there are literally millions of local business out there advertising in Yellow Pages directories. Local search is one of their next big growth areas. So what local search tools are there today?

Local Search Solutions and Advertising Opportunities

Yahoo! (it owns Overture, AllTheWeb, AltaVista and Inktomi)

Yahoo.com and Yahoo.co.uk have "Local" and "Business Finder" tabs on their respective homepages. Click on these and search results are displayed from a variety of sources that are focused on finding local businesses.

In the US, results pages comprise PPC advertising results from Overture, Yellow Pages business listings (some of this data is from InfoUSA <<http://www.infousa.com/>>) and links to Yahoo! maps. Searchers can rank listings based on how other searchers have rated the businesses - these rankings and accompanying reviews are written by Yahoo! users. More on these sorts of review services here <<http://www.payperclickanalyst.com/content/templates/?a=358&z=1>>.

US businesses have three advertising opportunities in local search results. Firstly, they can appear in sponsored listings powered by Overture. Overture offer two PPC advertising programs in the US: normal Overture listings <<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/srch/index.php>> that are distributed across the web and Local Sponsored Search <<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/local/index.php>> which is focused on delivering local search traffic. Exactly how these are employed on Yahoo! Local isn't clear; the best approach is to advertise in both programs to ensure coverage for all the relevant keywords for the business being advertised. Both are charged on a pay-per-click

basis and distribute across other websites including MSN, AltaVista and ISP and destination websites.

Businesses can also list themselves for free with a Basic Business Listing <<http://listings.local.yahoo.com/>> or pay for a Local Enhanced Listing <<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/local/ll.php>> at USD 9.95 a month.

Related FreePint links:

- ' Internet Searching ' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>
- Post a message to the author, Duncan Parry, 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/280705.htm#feature>
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In the UK, search results currently only show Yellow-Pages style listings. The source of this data isn't clear and there are currently no PPC listings and no links to maps. However Yahoo! Local is still a work in progress and has yet to be fully rolled out across the world. Expect to see PPC listings and map links on local search results across the international Yahoo! websites in future.

Google

Google.com has a 'local' tab that displays search results from AdWords, Google's PPC advertising program, Google maps showing businesses listed in the search results and Yellow Pages business listings; the sources of the latter vary and Google has not specified exactly which companies it uses to populate these. Google Maps offers a unique feature: satellite photos which you can zoom into. It's fun to play with and sometimes useful for providing a different perspective of where a business is located.

Google Earth <<http://earth.google.com/>> is even more fun. Built on technology Google acquired with the purchase of KeyHole, Google Earth is a free piece of software that displays satellite photos from around the world and allows you to zoom in a location. The visual affects are eye catching - zooming in from space down to (almost) street level is impressive. Google's own website describes this as 'planet surfing' (!). On a more practical level, the software includes the ability to show local landmarks and businesses, view driving directions and view some streets from street level - so you can see where landmarks should be during your journey. Right now local business data is only available for the US, but no doubt it will be extended to other countries over time; the road data for the UK has already improved.

Businesses can get listed on Google Local via advertising in Google AdWords on a PPC basis. Sadly, for the searches I have done, the Google Ads shown are not targeted to the local area, only to the type of service implied in the keyword. So a search for "car dealer Cape Coral" and for "car dealer New York" triggered the same car dealer adverts.

Google does have a local PPC advertising program. In the US, advertisers can choose a DMA (Direct Marketing Area) to restrict their advertisements to, or specify cities or latitude and longitude co- ordinates. Hopefully Google will start to display these adverts on Google Local instead of national ones.

Google.co.uk does not have a local search tab yet. Google have introduced Google Maps UK <<http://maps.google.co.uk/>> which offers the

ability to plot local business on the map and search for businesses. A good idea - sadly let down by the quality of the underlying data; Google is crawling the web for business websites and lists of businesses and trying to learn their location from this data. Mistakes are common.

This attempt to take unstructured web data and structure it in a similar way to Yellow Pages listings (which have human oversight) is ambitious to say the least. The Scotsman newspaper <<http://news.scotsman.com/Edinburgh.cfm?id=533162005>> recently highlighted how a search for brothels in Edinburgh on Google Maps listed local restaurants and shops as brothels. Google is also using data from Yell.com to provide structure to listings - in my opinion, they need to. A search for "accountant London", for example, lists the British Quality Foundation as the top result at the time of writing <<http://digbig.com/4dyxa>>. There are also driving directions at the site.

Advertising-wise, there are no PPC adverts on Google Maps (yet) and no direct way for businesses to add their details; however, Google lists the websites it has found businesses on next to some Google Maps results - so getting your business listed on those sites and Yell.com should help you achieve a listing in Google Maps. Hopefully, Google will introduce a Google Local tab for the UK, with PPC results and the ability to add your business details.

MSN

Microsoft started developing its own search technology in 2003 (it was licensing results from Inktomi, whom rival Yahoo! bought). It has started a trial of its own PPC advertising program, code-named "Moonshot" in France and Singapore, and intends to introduce it across the different MSN websites country by country.

I would not expect to see MSN PPC advertising replacing Overture results on MSN websites until 2006 at the earliest, with a staggered roll-out country-by-country - Microsoft needs to get the technology and pricing model right, recruit staff for each country and sign up advertisers.

So what does this mean for MSN local search? There is already a beta of its local search results in the US which includes PPC results (currently from Overture), maps, aerial photos, web results and business listings (source unknown). You can choose to see business or residential listings. An example is here for Cape Coral Car Dealers <<http://digbig.com/4dyxb>>.

Hopefully, MSN will develop this further to show locally-targeted PPC adverts (eventually from its own advertising program) and make clear the source of the business listings, so you can add business details. Until then, advertisers will have to make do with advertising via Overture.

Local search results on MSN.co.uk are no different from those for a normal search; Overture PPC results followed by MSN web results. No doubt this will change over time.

Ask Jeeves

The people at Ask Jeeves have been busy. They acquired Interactive Search Holdings <<http://www.interactivesearchholdings.com/>> (who own MyWay.com, MySearch.com, Excite.com, iWon and the MaxOnline advertising network). Then they acquired Excite Europe from Tiscali. Following that, InterActive Corp <<http://www.iac.com/>>, owners of Excite.com, CitySearch.com and Match.com amongst others, announced they were acquiring Ask Jeeves. Ask has bought Bloglines <<http://www.bloglines.com/>>, a very useful RSS aggregator, too. Amongst all this M&A activity Ask is also developing Ask Jeeves Local <<http://local.ask.com/local>>. Results here feature PPC adverts (there was only one for the search "car dealer Cape Coral" <<http://digbig.com/4dyxc>>), business listings and a link to use to view results on a map. There are also driving directions.

For advertisers there is no direct opportunity to advertise on local listings - the PPC adverts are from Google and no indication of how to get listed in the business listings. But this is a beta test; and once InterActive Corp have acquired Ask Jeeves, it may add local search results from CitySearch.com; these include PPC results powered by its own technology. Less exposure for Google PPC advertisements, perhaps.

Ask.co.uk doesn't have a local tab yet; the maps and driving directions tabs are fairly new, so hopefully this will follow. Local search results currently include PPC adverts and sometimes links to results provided by either business directory Thomson Local or its PPC engine, WebFinder.com. Thomson is paying for this exposure by buying advertising slots, so these results may not stay around for long; the WebFinder results are more permanent, listed under "Recommended results". Unfortunately, the relevance is poor; searching for a car result in a town in the county of Surrey produced WebFinder results for London car dealers.

Yellow Pages Online

There are numerous Yellow Pages companies with websites (called IYPs, Internet Yellow Pages); some are notably better than others and have embraced search marketing. There isn't room here to look at them in detail, so here is an overview of a few important players.

In the US, SuperPages.com offers PPC advertising to SME business who don't have a website (they offer business profile pages) and have done away with the hassle of keyword bidding by allowing advertisers to bid for a position in the categories that describe their business (see this review <<http://digbig.com/4ecfg>>). CitySearch.com also offers local search PPC advertising which it

powers with its own technology.

Interchange has developed ePilot Local Search aimed at Yellow Pages publishers wanting to build a PPC local search platform. It is also building its own local search site, Local.com. Advertisers can sign up at ePilot.com for national and local PPC advertising. PremierGuide <<http://www.premierguide.com/>> has developed a network of partnerships with local newspaper and TV websites that individually offer advertising on a flat fee basis; a review of this will soon appear here <<http://digbig.com/4ecfh>>.

In the UK, the main IYPs are Yell.com and ThomsonLocal.com (including its PPC engine, WebFinder.com). Yell publishes the free Yellow Pages directory distributed across the UK, Thomson a similar blue book. Online, Thomson is ahead of Yell in my opinion; Yell has no PPC offering and no clear network of partners (although it does license its listings out - see Google above) whilst Thomson conspicuously builds a network of partners for both their business listings and for their WebFinder PPC results, which are aimed at local traffic but actually contain plenty of non-local searches. Other players include 192.com and Scoot.com.

The Future

All the search engines will improve their local search results with targeted local PPC adverts and hopefully make it clear how to add business details. They will also cater for businesses without websites; Yahoo! is already offering free websites to US SMEs whilst SuperPages.com offers business profile pages.

A major development in search marketing, and especially in local search, is 'pay per call'. These advertisements feature a telephone number for the business in question; when consumers call it (via their telephone or, as voice over IP becomes common, via their computer) the business is charged for the call by the search engine, hence pay per call. This development is aimed at businesses without a website, including many SMEs and local businesses, as well as those that have call centres and sales teams (e.g. mortgage brokers). Miva already offers pay per call in the US and will soon offer it in the UK, too.

As more local businesses are listed online and the printed directory is increasingly replaced by the search engines and IYP websites, so consumer reviews of local businesses - e.g. restaurants, builders etc - will become more common. This offers opportunities and threats for local businesses. I've covered this more in "Social Networks, Customer Reviews and Local Search: Rude Waiters Beware the Search Engines." <<http://digbig.com/4ecfj>>. Local search results have started to spread to mobile phones too - and as PDAs and mobiles merged into 'Smart Phones' with web browsing abilities, these can only become more common.

Events

United Kingdom:

- "STN Training courses - Pharma Focus" 16th - 18th August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e544>>
- "6th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services" 22nd - 25th August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e532>>
- "Digital Resources for the Humanities 2005" 4th - 7th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e545>>

Australia and Territories:

- "Power Searching with the Pros" 29th August - 6th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e547>>
- "Intranet Usability" 29th - 31st August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e541>>
- "neXt 2005 ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference" 6th - 9th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e535>>

Canada:

- "2005 Government & Health Technologies Forum" 30th - 31st August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e537>>

Ireland:

- "6th European Conference on Knowledge Management" 8th - 9th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e481>>
- "Evaluating e-learning - a how to guide" 8th September
<http://www.freepint.com/go/e492>

New Zealand:

- "LIANZA 2005 Conference, te wero" 11th - 14th September
<http://www.freepint.com/go/e521>

These are just a selection of the 48 global events listed on the FreePint Website at
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A look back at what FreePint covered at this time in previous years:

- FreePint No.164 29th July 2004. "Artificial Intelligence" and "Money Laundering new regulations - implications for information provision"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/290704.htm>
- FreePint No.142 7th August 2003. "The Safety of Children on the Internet" and "Competition Law Resources Online"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070803.htm>
- Free Pint No.117 25th July 2002. "News Agencies on the Web"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/250702.htm>
- Free Pint No.93, 2nd August 2001. "Photography through the Web - Part 1" and "Latin America"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020801.htm>
- Free Pint No.68, 3rd August 2000. "Netting your Ancestors: Genealogy Sites on the Internet for tracing UK Ancestors" and "Surveillance and Privacy"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/030800.htm>
- Free Pint No.44, 5th August 1999. "Net Worth" and "How will we survive Information Overload?"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050899.htm>
- Free Pint No.19, 23rd July 1998. "Wish You Were Here ... Travel and Tourism Resources on the Web" and "First Amongst Equals"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/230798.htm>