Webb's web

Kerry Webb

It offers browsable indexes based on the lists' description, name and subject as well as a search facility. When you get to the entries for the lists though, it spells out the number of members, host organisation, list owner's address and information on how to subscribe.

Looking for lists

If you're looking for a list dealing with a specific topic, there are several ways to search for it. One of the best services is Tile.Net at http://tile.net/lists/amial.html It offers browsable indexes based on the lists' description, name and subject as well as a search facility. Unfortunately in the description index, nobody has checked for non-filing characters so there are a lot of entries under 'A'. When you get to the entries for the lists though, it spells out the number of members, host organisation, list owner's address and information on how to subscribe.

On another tack, instead of 'list owner' in the preceding sentence, I almost typed listmaster — which would not have been a good idea. On the otherwise staid DIGLIB list, a recent request for a non-gender-specific alternative to 'webmaster' generated a storm of postings.

Screen it!
Censorship and filtering continue to be hot topics for Net content. At http://www.screenit.com you won't find Internet ratings, but it does offer an intriguing service for films, videos and popular music. It comes from a small operation in the Washington DC area and provides parents with information about how entertainment treats alcohol and drugs, or violence, or good/bad attitudes. They also cover 'tense family scenes' and 'topics to talk about'. Each aspect is rated from *extreme* and *heavy* to *minor* and *none*. It's a useful tool.

Pro's and cons of filtering
The ALA's office of Intellectual Freedom released a statement on 1 July affirming that the use of filtering software abridges its *Library Bill of Rights*. This statement came only a few days after the United States Supreme Court stated that communications over the Internet deserve the highest level of Constitutional protection. The ALA points out that sites that have been blocked by popular commercial blocking/filtering products include those on breast cancer, AIDS, women's rights, and animal rights. Not surprisingly, concerns about legal consequences were a factor in the ALA's deliberations, as they say that 'use of blocking/filtering software creates an implied contract with parents that their children will not be able to access material on the Internet that they do not wish their children read or view. Libraries will be unable to fulfil this implied contract, due to the technological limitations of the software, thus exposing themselves to possible legal liability and litigation'. The statement is at http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/filt_stm.html.

And in the blue corner, Filtering Facts at http://www.filteringfacts.org has been formed to promote the acceptability of filtering in libraries. Led by David Burt from the Lake Oswego Public Library in Oregon, Filtering Facts considers filters to be an interim solution until there's a better way of providing access to a large number of suitable sites for public access.

The Walsh report
Electronic Frontiers Australia has obtained permission to release the 'Review of policy relating to encryption technologies', otherwise known as the Walsh Report, which had to be obtained under a Freedom of Information application. It was listed for sale by the AGPS in January, but was hurriedly withdrawn from the list three weeks later, following an enquiry by EFA as to the reasons why it was not actually available for sale.

The report (minus a number of paragraphs which have been removed under freedom of information guidelines) is available at http://www.efa.org.au/Issues/Crypto/Walsh/. There are two versions provided — one suitable for reading on-line and a complete version which can be downloaded.

GILS report
The final report of the project 'An evaluation of the US Government's implementation of the Government Information Locator Service (GILS)' is now available for Web access. It documents the results of a nine-month evaluation study of GILS, investigating how GILS serves various user groups, how it improves public access to government information, and how it works as a tool for information resources management. The final report and the original technical proposal are at http://www.unt.edu/slis/research/gilseval/gilsdocs.htm.

Relevance study
A recent study of relevance among Web Search Engines showed that Alta Vista, Excite and Infoseek provided the best results. Lycos is the better performer for queries which are unstructured queries, and Hotbot is better if the queries are structured. The study is at http://www.winona.msus.edu/is-f/library-f/webind2/webind2.htm.

Of course if you haven't time to decide whether your search is structured or unstructured, you can do what I do and try Inference Find at http://www.inference.com/ifind/ It uses all of them at the same time.

Knowledge management
There's a new mailing list dedicated to knowledge management. This list is initially wide-open to knowledge management-related issues, though in time it may evolve into specialised subjects. To join the discussion, send <subscribe km> in the body of a message to km@mccmedia.com

A search on Tile.Net shows a list on a similar topic operating out of the Library at UCSF.

Japanese journals
At http://www.netpassport.or.jp/~wykosen/ there's a list (in English) of Japanese Journals published in Japan with articles in English or other languages. The author is interested in suggested additions to the list and can be contacted at ykosen@lib.kobe-u.ac.jp.

Not just church archives
The Billy Graham Center Archives has provided information on resources to help congregations working on an archival program. The information, at http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/caw.html includes a bibliography, a list of suppliers and other helpful information. It is aimed at amateur archivists wanting to help their community preserve and benefit from its history, and would be just as useful for any small organisation developing its archives.

French library education
Jack Kessler in his FYI France e-journal reports on the new Information Profession in France, with emphasis on ENSSIB (Ecole nationale superieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliotheques) at http://www.enssib.fr/. It appears that the word 'library' was retained only with difficulty, and that the degrees offered at ENSSIB are very much directed at digital information, with virtually no consideration of library work relating to books or other media.

Internet Free-Press
Internet Free-Press at http://www.free-press.com/ is a site where you can learn about publishing e-journals and join a forum which discusses all aspects of electronic publishing. Sponsored by MCB University Press, the service provides various facilities including an electronic publishing service and a subscription to the Internet Research e-journal. The subscription rate is £72 per annum.

Copyright reports
The QANTM CMC has commissioned a report on copyright for multimedia which suggests that creators and producers should find other ways to protect their intellectual property in the future. It suggests that they could consider areas such as patents, petty patents and integrated circuits and databases, which may provide better results. The report also examines the implications of moral rights legislation in Australia, and the impact of new technologies in digital media.

The executive summary of the report, 'National and International Issues in Intellectual Property and Multimedia', is at http://

www.qantm.com.au/copyright/publication.html where there is also information for ordering the full report.

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Communications and the Arts have jointly prepared a discussion paper titled 'Copyright reform and the digital agenda' which can be found at http://law.gov.au/publications/digital.htm or http://www.dca.gov.au/pubs/digital.html.

The paper seeks comments from the community on copyright reform proposals which are designed to update copyright to meet the challenges posed by new technologies. The deadline for comments will have closed by the time you read this, but it provides a useful indication of government thinking on the issues.

Finally, there's a report from the La Trobe University Online Media Program 'Capturing the value of Australian online content: Mapping the regulatory domain' at http://teloz.latrobe.edu.au/omp. It evaluates the strategies proposed for gaining a share of the value generated by the content of new online media, and the role played by regulation in this.

AMICO
The Association of Art Museum Directors (based in North America) is considering forming a consortium to make their digital documentation collectively available to the educational community. Representatives of major museums are meeting to define the terms of their collaboration and to outline the nature of a common digital library of text, image and multimedia data.

Details about this emerging organisation and the formation of the consortium can be found at http://www.amn.org/AMICO including the report of the group's most recent meeting.

Scraps of SCRAN
Bruce Royan will be known to many Australian librarians, as a regular at IFLA and former manager of the Singapore bibliographic network. He now runs SCRAN (which he assures me is an ancient Scottish word for food) and has announced their Web site at http://www.scran.ac.uk. SCRAN is a 'Millennium project' to build a networked multimedia resource base for the study, teaching and appreciation of history and material culture in Scotland. Currently the SCRAN resource base contains about 60 000 text records of objects from over thirty museums, galleries and archives, and by the year 2000 they expect to have 1.5 million records and 100 000 multimedia objects. ■

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