



Kerry Webb

An update on netiquette

My favourite (non-work) list discusses aspects of the US Civil War, a topic which can inflame passions if it's not well-controlled. The members of this list manage to keep the dialogue interesting and the temper rational, mostly through the careful intervention of the list managers. The group almost came undone recently due to some very bad manners, and this is a lesson for all who use lists. It started with an exchange by private e-mail which became quite abusive, until one of the parties posted the exchange to the list. The result was a day or so of charge and countercharge and finally the list owners excommunicated both of the offending members. (And then someone else objected to the use of the word 'excommunicate' and so it went...)

Never, never, never post private e-mail to a list, unless you have the permission of all parties. Life's too short and bandwidth is too narrow for all that fuss. And while we're on the subject of good manners, it is well worth reading the 'Rules of netiquette', written by our own ALIANet web manager, Ivan Trundle at <http://www.alia.org.au/alianet/listservs/rules.html>.

Not recommended for children over the age of fifteen

When the stress of the hectic information industry gets too much for you, try a visit to Legopolis at <http://www.legopolis.com>. Not only can you see models made with the ever-popular bricks, but you can also use an interactive tool to assemble mini-figures with different heads, torsos and legs. And, if you're short of time, there's a tool to make a figure at random. There, feel better now?

Electronic Records Research

In the July/August 1997 issue of D-Lib magazine, there's a report of the Electronic Records Research Working Meeting held from 28–30 May 1997 in Pittsburgh. The meeting was organised by David Bearman's firm Archives & Museum Informatics, and involved an international audience (including speakers from the records management office of New South Wales and the Australian Archives). Its focus was to advance the state of research on creating and acquiring electronic records and assist in explaining the view of the archival community to others. See the report at <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july97/07bearman.html>.

Australian scientific conferences

Something new from the Australian Academy of Science is a database for scientific conference listings. It's at <http://www.science.org.au/conf.htm>. The database is actually operated by the Royal Society of New Zealand and encompasses listings for conferences all around the world. Unfortunately, it's not as useful as it could be.

You can browse the database to see a list of Australian conferences or the worldwide list,

but the search engine only permits one keyword per search, so you can't search for say 'Australia' and 'physics' together. Still, there are a good number of conferences listed, and if you know of one that's not there you can enter the details yourself.

Correction

In the September column, I gave the address of a list on the topic of knowledge management. That information was inaccurate, and I've since been told that the correct address for subscribing is listserv@mccmedia.com. To join, send the message subscribe km your-name

Evaluating Internet resources

In the latest edition of the Public-Access Computer Systems Review, there's a good article by Alastair G Smith on criteria for evaluating information resources on the Net. It presents a toolbox of criteria, including scope, content, design, purpose and audience. A number of well-known sites are rated according to Smith's criteria. It's worth reading and it provides Net intermediaries with a useful tool for evaluation. See it at <http://info.lib.uh.edu/pr/v8/n3/smit8n3.html>.

Web researchers

drawing the threads together

The Distributed Systems Technology Centre, together with a number of collaborators has announced two new projects — Zedweb and Metaweb, both partially funded by the National Priority (Reserve) Fund administered by the AVCC Standing Committee on Information Resources.

ZedWeb, formally known as the Web to Z39.50 Gateway Service project, will provide a service that integrates Australian Z39.50 servers and provides a single web-interface to access the underlying data sources. MetaWeb, the Metadata Tools and Services project will develop metadata element sets, user tools, and indexing services to promote the use and exploitation of metadata on the Internet. As the projects progress, you'll be able to follow their progress through the DTSC's Resource Discover Unit's pages at <http://www.dtsc.edu.au/RDU/>.

Papers from an E-journals conference

The Association of Research Libraries has published the papers presented at the conference on 'Scholarly communication and technology' held in April and organised by the Mellon Foundation. Some of the issues discussed the economics of electronic scholarly publishing, the future of consortia and access versus ownership, electronic content licensing, and updates on several projects such as the Columbia University Online Books Project, Project Muse at Johns Hopkins University, and JSTOR. The conference site is at <http://arl.cni.org/scomm/scat/index.html>.

Never, never, never post private e-mail to a list, unless you have the permission of all parties. Life's too short and bandwidth is too narrow for all that fuss.

Canberra — feel the humour

The National Museum of Australia has done its bit to put Australian politics in perspective by mounting the on-line version of its exhibition *Bringing the House down '97 — 12 months of Australian political humour*. Enjoy it at <http://www.nma.gov.au/NMA/exhibits/bthd/>.

Not just another e-magazine

Biblio Tech Review is a new service offered by Peter Evans, a UK consultant with extensive experience in library automation. Its Web site at <http://www.biblio-tech.com/biblio> offers news from the computer industry, libraries and system vendors. Regular features include a monthly magazine, information on library automation technology, and reviews of new products. The September 97 issue includes a review of *Ntrigue — Windows over the Web*, and a technology briefing on Java and Network computers. There is a clear European slant to much of the reporting, but the information on technology trends and conferences (including those coming up in North America and Australasia) is likely to be useful to readers all over the world.

Copyright control system

The Association of American Publishers, in co-operation with the Corporation for National Research Initiatives, has developed a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) system that it hopes will make it easier to identify the ownership of material on the Internet and about any copyright restrictions relating to it. A numeric tag is embedded in the data, linked to the DOI directory which enables the user to link to the object's current rights holder. The dynamic nature of the directory can accommodate constantly changing ownership of these rights. See how the DOI works at <http://www.doi.org/>.

Subscription-based services

Edupage (<http://www.educom.edu/edupage.old/edupage.97/edupage-09.04.97>) reports on a study by Forrester Research which casts doubts on the future of subscription-based services on the Web, citing as an example the relatively slow uptake of paying subscribers to Internet gaming services. This appears to indicate that advertisements will continue to be a major money-spinner for various sites.

In this context, it's interesting to note that Encyclopedia Britannica has dropped its online subscription rate to US\$8.50 per month or \$85 per year, having already alienated many previous CD-ROM buyers when it dramatically reduced the purchase price of that product.

Web OPAC paper

Vianne Sha from the University of Missouri presented a paper titled *Web-interfaced OPAC: Design and Maintenance* at the 1997 American Association for Law Librarians Annual Meeting. The slides and speaking notes from the presen-

tation are now available on the Web at <http://www.law.missouri.edu/vianne/webpac/sld001.htm>. She's especially interested in getting comments on her proposal to use authority records as the URN resolution server.

She's also announced a new search engine on her Web site 'Internet Library for Librarians' to allow keyword searching. It's at <http://www.itcompany.com/inforetriever/>. The search engine works well, but the site itself seems very cluttered, with far too much use of animation and scrolling.

Implications of linking

There's been a bit of discussion on Tony Barry's LINK list recently on whether you should ask permission before putting links to other sites on your own pages. Opinion is clearly divided on the topic. In the meantime, a German student has done a very good job in setting up a 'Link controversy page' at <http://www.jura.uni-tuebingen.de/~s-bes1/lcp.html>. It covers a number of the current cases where unauthorised links have caused some disputes, as well as possible technical solutions to the problems. There's similar coverage on the *Law Journal EXTRA* site at <http://www.ljx.com/internet/irlink.html>.

New on AgriWeb

The AgriWeb Australia site (<http://www.ruralnet.com.au/AgriWeb/>) has been redesigned to make it easier and quicker for users with all sorts of agricultural interests. New features include a selection menu for subject categories, an autozoom feature to expand the current page to full screen for easier viewing, and improved page layouts throughout the site. An official mirror site has been established on Telstra's BigPond Internet Server for the convenience of regular BigPond users (but other users can also access it). The mirror site is at <http://www.users.bigpond.com/AgriWeb/>.

UK report on libraries

Although Britain's libraries are extremely popular with their users, a UK Audit Commission report recommends that they 'need to make better use of developments in information and communication technology to make their administration more efficient and to offer new services to users'. A story on the report is at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/09/0924/books.shtml>.

Papers from SIGIR-97 workshop

An electronic version of the proceedings for the 1997 SIGIR Workshop on Networked Information Retrieval is now available at <http://ciir.cs.umass.edu/nir97/>.

The papers cover Web searching, digital libraries, and selection of resources. The one that looks most interesting is *Networked digital libraries: the concept and a case study* by a team from Portugal. ■

Libraries need to make better use of developments in information and communication technology to make their administration more efficient...

The ALIA home pages and the ALIA web service, ALIANet, can be found at the following URL:
<http://www.alia.org.au/>

SAVE YOURSELF THE TROUBLE OF TYPING THESE URLS!

This column (with associated hyperlinks) is on ALIANet, and has the URL of <http://www.alia.org.au/incite/www/>

[Please note that full-stops at the end of any URL or e-mail addresses, or underlines, appearing in *inCite* should NOT be used]

Contributions and suggestions for this column are always welcome. Please e-mail Kerry Webb at kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au or via the ALIA National Office, incite@alia.org.au