



**Kerry Webb**

[kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au](mailto:kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au)

Well, I have looked around the web and seen that the previous occupant has done a pretty good job, and left it all neat and tidy, so here goes...

# International Council on Archives

The International Council on Archives is the professional organisation for the world archival community. Except for North America, the Council has branches in all parts of the world, with over 1500 members in more than 170 countries and territories. From the home page at <http://www.ica.org/>, you will find information about the Council's mission, its constitution and information about the officers who work on behalf of the Council. The publications section includes information about *Comma*, its chief serial publication, ICA standards and research studies. There are also links to the websites of its branches, including PARBICA, the Pacific Regional Branch at [http://www.archivenet.gov.au/archives/parbica/parbica\\_main.htm](http://www.archivenet.gov.au/archives/parbica/parbica_main.htm).

### OUN tensing for the big effort

Oxford University Press (OUP) has announced a partnership with Oxford University Library Services (OULS) in support of the national SHERPA project. OUP will provide OULS with online access to articles by Oxford-based authors published in many of the Oxford journals from 2002. These will then be searchable and made available free of charge to researchers around the world. SHERPA [<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk>], as reported by Colin Steele in *inCite* last year, is a project that is investigating the concept of institutional open archive repositories. Oxford is one of nine United Kingdom institutions currently taking part. More information about the OUP component will be available soon <http://www.eprints.ouls.ox.ac.uk> (but not yet).

### Something to crow about

A collection of more than twelve million historic still images from the archives of the British Pathé news-reel service has been put online <http://www.britishpathe.com>. The images — in both black and white and colour — cover news, sport, social history and entertainment from 1896 to 1970, and are taken at one-second intervals from 3500 hours of 35mm film. The images and are available for free preview, and the images and film clips can be purchased online at a higher resolution. There is a good search engine to start you on your quest, or you can take a lucky dip or even check out what happened 'on this day'. You will find the famous, the infamous, the trivial and the fascinating. It is addictive.

### Fashion statements

If you do not know your justaucorps from your charmeuse, help is at hand. Anne Bissonnette, a curator at the Kent State University Museum, has compiled a 'Visual dictionary of fashion' [<http://dept.kent.edu/museum/costume/>] though which you can 'enter the world of fashion and witness the change in silhouettes, accessories, lingerie and hairstyles from the 18th to the 20th century.' It has annotated photographs of fashions, with an emphasis on female dress from Europe and the United States. It also includes information about male and children's fashions, and costumes of many other countries. It does not have a search facility, but you can browse through various categories of photographs, mostly of costumes from the Museum's collections.

### Culture online

The United Kingdom Government is funding approximately twenty projects between 2002 and 2004, to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. It brings together cultural organisations with leading technical providers to create projects that will generate interest in the community and give people access to the arts, as well as opening up cultural institutions to the wider community. Some of the early projects include ArtisanCam where you can watch an artisan at work and have e-mail or online discussions with the person, and Plant Cultures which uses the plants of a particular region as an entry point to many aspects of that region's culture — food, superstition, religion, fashion, cosmetics and art. Further details on the projects are at <http://www.cultureonline.gov.uk/projects/index.asp>.

### Librarians online ...

ALIA member Alison Morin has notified us of a new feature that she is co-ordinating at the Library of Congress site. *Luminary Lectures @ Your Library* is a program designed to bring prominent speakers in the field of librarianship to the Library of Congress to speak on a variety of topics of interest to the library community and to those who love libraries. The site broadcasts each lecture live and has the recorded webcasts available for most of the lectures (you will need Real Player for these). It is at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/lectures/> and as well as the webcasts, it has an outline of each presentation and in many cases, PowerPoint slides. Those

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who have already appeared include such notables as Toni Carbo, Barbara Quint, Brewster Kahle and Karen Coyle. Sounds like a good program for some of our larger libraries to adopt.

#### ... and books too

The ACLS History E-Book Project (HEB) has a new white paper online, entitled 'Report on technology development and production workflow for XML encoded E-Books' by Electronic Publishing Specialist Nancy Lin. It sets out, in easily accessible terms, the technical information and production processes behind the Project's new frontlist titles. We are more familiar with backlists, where scanned images can allow for the cost-efficient publication of large groups of books at a time, but frontlist titles provide more of a challenge. With these, the aim is to use more robust and flexible technology to push beyond the simple digitisation of the print book — to fully exercise the capabilities of e-books. The paper covers a range of topics including the reasons for using XML, details of e-book features and functions, costs of production, and innovative solutions for citation, structure, and navigation of online books. It is available in both HTML and PDF form at <http://www.historyebook.org/heb-whitepaper-1.html>.

#### Educational metadata paper

*Indexing the world of information*: an international conference organised by the Australian Society of Indexers [<http://www.aussi.org/conferences/2003/default.htm>] was held in Sydney in September, with many well-known Australian experts presenting papers. The conference examined how indexing, thesaurus construction, classification and database management are integrating with the information architecture and content management of the online world. One of the presenters was Nelly Ivanova from EdNA, whose paper 'Using Metadata: a magic bullet or death by degrees' tried to answer that question by using EdNA Online as a case study. In the end, there is no simple answer (surprise!) but the paper does set out many of the arguments relating to the use of metadata, and does it quite well. You'll find it at <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/page1059.html>.

#### While we are on the subject ...

One of the benefits of writing a column like this is the opportunity for shameless self-promotion. The drawback of course, is that you have to have something worth promoting. I recently did a bit of investigation on how the big search engines use metadata, and came to the conclusion that some did and some didn't (another surprise!). A summary of the findings is at [http://alia.org.au/~kwebb/Metadata\\_test.htm](http://alia.org.au/~kwebb/Metadata_test.htm). What I did not expect though was that some of their practices changed over a short time. MSN and Hotbot (which both use Inktomi) initially displayed the content of the Description META

tag in their search results, but when I checked a few weeks later they had stopped this, and now used a modified form of the text that appeared at the top of the page in question. Which set me wondering how they do it, and if it's an improvement.

#### Government Publications Register

The National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE) has compiled, with the assistance of various Commonwealth government agencies, the Publications Register [<http://www.publications.gov.au>]. It lets the user search or browse government agencies by name or subject categories, with quick links to the National Library's services, Federal Parliament resources and online bookstores. Eventually they plan to allow searching of specific publication titles from a database compiled from data automatically collected from departmental and agency websites. Bearing in mind that many people are not too sure about whether a particular agency is in the local, state or federal government, it would be a good idea if they could somehow gather information about other jurisdictions into this register, wouldn't it?

#### Quoting URLs

URLs are getting longer and therefore harder to manage. Whether it is a result of using content management systems or just more complicated websites, you will quite often see e-mail messages quoting URLs that go over two or three lines. Some systems can let you click on it, but many cannot, and so you have to cut, paste, slice'n'dice until you can shovel the address into the browser's window. There are alternatives: MakeAShorterLink [<http://www.makeashorterlink.com>] and TinyURL [<http://www.tinyurl.com>]. Each takes the long URL that you supply and turns it into one that fits more neatly into your e-mail or document. The only concern is the period for which the smaller URLs will remain current, but if it is only short-term use, there isn't a problem. (I prefer TinyURL because it gives you a shorter URL!)

#### Thoughts on website design

My main line of work is in standards and policies for web design, so this article particularly caught my eye — [http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/examining\\_the\\_role\\_of\\_de\\_facto\\_standards\\_on\\_the\\_web.php](http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/examining_the_role_of_de_facto_standards_on_the_web.php) or <http://tinyurl.com/qvdo>. It looks at the point at which a design practice is so dominant that varying from it degrades the usability of a site. Are users' expectations set when ninety per cent of sites do something a certain way? And if not ninety per cent, then what is the frequency at which this happens?

#### And finally ...

Continuing Belinda's fine tradition, I welcome any comments and suggestions for the column. It is good to be back! ■

**He's back!**  
This issue sees the return of Kerry Webb to the pages of *inCite*. Kerry last appeared here in June 1999. Welcome back, Kerry!  
Ed.

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