Webb's webb

But do they appreciate us?

Andy Clarke in his blog at **http://tinyurl.com/4towwg** raises a good point about the differences between browsers. Web developers are familiar with the problem of trying to code so that different browsers (and different versions of browsers) will display pages exactly the same: it's often very time-consuming. What Andy's asking is "does it really matter?" And the answer is that if the client thinks it matters, then it does. So there. But maybe it's also a matter of educating the client about the extra work involved and the little extra benefit of exact duplication of the appearance.

Shared resources?

The people at LibraryThing - management and users – have become a little perturbed at an announcement from OCLC (**http://www.oclc.org/us/en/worldcat/catalog/policy/default.htm**) that cataloguing downloaded from their WorldCat service will have certain restrictions put upon it. One of these restrictions may be that for-profit organisations (like LibraryThing) won't be able to use this metadata freely. You can see why they'd be concerned: I can see OCLC's point, but I don't agree with it one little bit. Surely there's room in this big world for this huge 'non-profit' company and a string of tiny commercial enterprises. It is a bit hard to follow the arguments pro and con (mostly con), so I've been relying on the Google Blog Search facility at **http://blogsearch.google.com**.

Digital culture

Charles Sturt University puts on an annual seminar in Canberra (with the assistance of the National Library and ALIA) and I spoke at the latest one in November. The highlights of the day for me (apart from the scrummy CSU cheese they served at the end of the day) were two quite different presentations - from Trevor Barr on the NBN Broadband tender and Christine Mackenzie on European libraries that she's visited. One thing that interested me about Trevor's talk was that so many people in the audience weren't aware of what the tender was about. And his conclusions were rather depressing - that Telstra was bound to win no matter what the Government did. I'm not really a Telstra hater, but I've become increasingly unhappy with the way that they abuse their monopoly. Happily, my mood was lifted by the enthusiasm that Christine expressed about the wonderful libraries that she visited, especially those in the Netherlands. I think I'll drop in on a few of them next time I'm in the area. The presentations from the seminar and recordings of the speakers will be available from **http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/austdigitalculture.html** soon.

Building blocks

If you're trying to understand social networking, a good place to start is the article by Gene Smith at **http://nform.ca/publications/social-software-building-block** (and he freely acknowledges the contribution by the earlier developers of the concept). The elements that they identify are Identity, Presence, Relationships, Conversations, Groups, Reputation and Sharing. The building blocks are indeed a good way to understand each type of social software service.

That's life

Just in time for those lazy hazy crazy days of summer when there's nothing to do, Google has added the impressive photo library of Life magazine to its Images database. You can get to it through a search of Google Images, or to see a good sample of the collection, start at **http://images.google.com/hosted/life**.

Something else for those summer days when there's nothing on the telly

It's pretty hard to keep up with those can't-do-without sites for book lovers. Fortunately there are people beavering away to bring you a few suggestions and recommendations at **http://tinyurl.com/4maljp** It's not easy to pick a favourite, but I do like Scandoo (**http://www.scandoo.com/**), which provides a sort of reliability rating for sites.

Libraries - the good news and the other ...

I was at a seminar on e-Government late last year and a speaker from a local council was talking about the way that they used social networking tools. He said that they introduced them through their local library because of the trust that the community had for libraries and librarians. Then he showed a page of discussions from their Facebook group in which one member was suggesting that they get together to plan a prank when "that annoying lady" was on duty.

Getting more effective feedback

Kim Krause Berg has written a cautionary note at **http://tinyurl.com/5zwbar** about asking for opinions on your website (and likens it to the dreaded "Do I look fat in these jeans?" question). It's far better, she says, to ask more directed questions like "What do you think is the purpose of the site?", "What need of yours does it fulfil?" and (a very good one) "Is it responsive to your emotions?" They're all good suggestions.

Saving your websites

The UK's Joint Information Systems Committee has just published its Preservation of Web Resources Handbook at **http://tinyurl.com/6m62jo**, primarily for the benefit of UK higher and further educational institutions, but the information is of course relevant to the broader community. Sensibly, they concentrate on publications and records rather than every last page and image on every site. They also make the point that prioritisation is the proper starting point. It's a very useful document, and provides plenty of guidance on what to do and how to do it.

Kerry Webb
kwebb@alianet.org.au

Don't forget to visit my blog
http://www.alia.org.au/webbsblog