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## *Information Online 2003*

With the recent Information Online 2003 Conference still fresh in people's minds, I would like to highlight some of the web sites mentioned by various speakers. In particular, it was interesting to hear about various developments on the Internet and on search engines in general.

I attended Chris Sherman's keynote speech at the conference, as well as his satellite event 'Savvy Net Searching' held at the State Library of NSW. Chris is well qualified to talk about Internet searching. Among other things, he is the president of Searchwise (a US web consulting firm), editor of SearchDay (a newsletter from Searchenginewatch.com), and co-author of 'The invisible web: uncovering information sources search engines can't see' (see: <<http://www.invisible-web.net/>>).

Information professionals deal with so many different sources daily that we do not always have time to keep up with the rapid changes on the Internet, but Chris brought me up to speed in a few hours. He explained clearly how search engines work, why they can only cover approximately 30% of the total web (sure, we all know this, but it's not always easy convincing your library users) and shed some light on trends like sponsored links, paid result rankings, various forms of targeted advertising, and how these developments affect results. If you are involved in teaching Internet search techniques, I recommend you look up Chris's work.

Some of the up-and-coming search engines Chris mentioned include:

*Teoma* <<http://teoma.com/>>

Makes suggestions for terms to refine a search alongside the results, and also lists categories relevant to the terms utilised in the search (which have been previously compiled by their editors).

*Vivisimo* <<http://vivisimo.com/>>

Gathers search results in category 'clusters' (similar to the way the now defunct Northern Light used to do it).

**Kartoo** <<http://www.kartoo.com/>>

This site presents results graphically, showing major terms and linkage relationships between sites that have hits.

Give one of them a try next time you need to use a search engine. Even if they don't become the 'next big thing', they are at least an interesting window into what search engine developers are working on. In comparison, I have to say I find myself increasingly frustrated with the search functionality of the databases we pay to access. Here's hoping the big legal publishers pick up on some of these innovations soon

### ***Other sites of interest mentioned at Information Online 2003***

<<http://www.britishpathe.com/index.cfm>>

Historical newsreel footage from the UK – watch short previews or buy online.

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

Find audio and video files on the web.

<<http://searchpdf.adobe.com/>>

Search specifically across pdf files on the web.

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

A blog site from a librarian in the US focussing on 'information shifting' and other issues facing libraries today. If you're not sure what a blog is, I intend to talk more about them in the next ALL. In the meantime, if you are interested in finding out more there are links to many other library blogs on the web page.

### ***Google Australia launched***

<<http://www.google.com.au/>>

In December 2002 one of the web's most popular search engines added a '.au' to its URL, joining a growing stable of successful locally-based versions of search engines. One can now limit a search to Australian sites only, without knowing any tricky search syntax. This makes sifting through results much easier for Australian searchers. I imagine it's been welcomed by Australian businesses too, who will no longer have to compete with overseas web sites for result rankings. Google are also rumoured to be opening an Australian office soon.

### ***NSW Parliamentary Library's news clipping database now available***

<<http://203.202.1.227/uhtbin/cgiirsi/Uw7Yvs3V1p/113210002/38/17/X>>

The NSW Parliamentary Library has for many years maintained a database of news  
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clippings, thoroughly indexing the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Newcastle Herald* and the *Illawarra Mercury*. That index is now available on their web site. The index covers articles dated from September 1997 to the present. One can search or browse either by a subject term or a name. This is especially useful in picking up concepts that would be hard to locate with a full-text search. The results list provides a headline, date, page

number and byline. They also include hyperlinked subject terms, enabling further research on related topics. One can email the results to him or herself, or print them in a choice of formats. This makes it easy (and cheaper) to locate the articles themselves in hard copy or via a subscription service.