Belinda Weaver

weaver@alia.org.au

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News on news

Google News has re-launched itself [http://news.google.com/]. Though still in beta test, the re-fashioned news service has created a bit of a buzz online. It refreshes headlines and stories constantly and provides content drawn from more than 4000 sources, which may be online newspapers, wire services or digital media entities such as CNN. Google News links only to those news services that offer their news freely. News behind subscription or licensing barriers will not be included. This is probably the best one-stop shop for world-wide news now. It covers breaking news from all over as well as catering for those who only want news in a specific category such as business or sports.

Get the picture

While there is a lot of library-related information online, not much of it is pictorial and not much shows it how it is. So it makes a nice change to see an online photographic exhibition of scenes within different libraries [http://www.lib.uconn.edu/Exhibits/diane/dinefpg.htm]. The images were captured by Diane Asseo Griliches, and the exhibition is called 'Library, the Drama Within'. I am not sure about drama, but there is a lot going on in the pictures which should show people that libraries are not necessarily quiet places and librarians do more than say 'shush'.

Get acknowledged

If you are a crime fiction fan, you may get a chance of a mention for helpfulness if mystery author Barbara Fister has her way. A combination of writer and librarian, Fister has a lot of tips for mystery writers on how to get the very most out of libraries and the reference librarians who work there (she calls it 'taming librarians'). She also has advice and tips on using the internet for research. Next time someone comes in wanting obscure poisons information or material on the para-normal, don't look at them askance; they may be re-searching their next thriller. Fister's 'Blood at the Source' site [http://www.barbarafister.com/BloodattheSource.html] would be a good start for them.

Letting it go

Now that we are in the electronic era, many wonderful information sources are freely available but many items are locked down in a bewildering array of new rules and rights. I read a quote about copyright the other day that sums up many people's feelings of confusion: 'Everything is possible. Nothing is permitted.' Yet many people want to share what they have as widely as possible. Open source software such as Linux and GNU, where program code is made fully available online for people to add to and develop, is one area where copyright has been dispensed with in the interests of creating and sharing something. Such people have spawned the Copyleft movement [http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/copyleft.html], which came into being with the GNU Project, but which has since been enthusiastically embraced by others. Copyleft allows people to use, copy, modify and distribute the software as long as they do not try to 'privatise' it by adding restrictions to it. It can also apply to information and other materials posted online. Find out more about copyleft in a FreePint article by Helen Bradley [http://www.freepint.com/issues/190902.htm tips].

While we are on the subject ...

Project Gutenberg is all about sharing and volunteering so it is a welcome sight seeing a Project Gutenberg emerge for music [http://ibiblio.org/gutenberg/music/]. This site is so far dedicated to an archive of chamber music only, but other genres may be added over time. You can download or print free scores and some public domain music, and there are links to software for music if you need them. Nobody makes any money out of Project Gutenberg. As with the copyleft movement, it's all about sharing.

Access to journals

Anyone who uses electronic journals is aware that the issue of long-term access to them is problematical. If a subscription is cancelled, what happens to the issues that were paid for, what guarantees do publishers give about continuing access, and so on. In partnership with Elsevier Science, Yale University Library began a Digital Preservation Planning Project to look at the job of digitally preserving a collection of commercially published scientific journals. One year down the track, Yale have released a report on how it is going [http://www.library.yale.edu/~okerson/yea/]. The project has designed a small prototype archive that could become 'the cornerstone of an e-journal archive environment that provides full backup, preservation, refreshing, and migration functions.' The full report is available or you can opt for sections that interest you.

Two for health libraries

Not everyone gets to work in a library that

matches their interests or expertise so it is good to see sites such as Medical Research for Non-Medical Librarians turning up online. The resources will be useful for anyone working in health. The site links to some offline material, but provides source information for anything not available through the page [http://denison.uchsc.edu/outreach/medbib3.htm]. If you need more, you could try the Librarian Portal in the UK-based National electronic Library for Health [http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/librarian/]. This service has been developed specifically for librarians in a world where information has simply exploded and knowledge management has become a vitally important tool. Alison Turner has written an article, 'Joining the dots: developing a resource to support changing roles in health libraries' in FreePint [http://www.freepint.com/issues/220802.htm#tips]. It covers the portal and a range of issues in health librarianship today.

Free bio site

Biographical information is not cheap to produce, so really good free biographical sites are thin on the internet ground. Who2: Find Famous People Fast is at least trying to fill a gap with its coverage of anyone who happens to be famous [http://www.who2.com/]. It covers celebrities, past and present, who may be authors, movie stars, royalty or notorious crooks. It even covers legendary heroes from mythology and cartoon characters, which is pushing the biography envelope just a little. In addition to birth and death dates, there are a couple of paragraphs explaining the person's inclusion in the site. More a fun site for a trivia night than a serious work such as *Who's Who*, but as good as any of its competitors online.

Digitising the humanities

If you work in the humanities and have a digitisation project underway, or if you would like some ideas of exactly what sorts of digitisation projects work best, use the Australian e-Humanities Gateway to see what's happening or to lodge your own details [http://www.ehum.edu.au/]. The Gateway was set up by the Australian e-Humanities Network with funding from the Australian Research Council, and is designed to be a reference point for information on projects in digital resources in humanities disciplines in Australia. It includes some papers presented to *Computing Arts 2001: Digital Resources for Research in the Humanities.*

Standardising literacy

The University of South Australia reviewed the existing US information literacy standards on behalf of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) in September 2000. CAUL then drew up their own [http://www.anu.edu.au/caul/caul-doc/publications.html], which will be reviewed again at a further workshop at the end of January 2003 and feedback is being sought on such questions as 'How has your institution used the existing standards?'. Suggestions for the second edition 2003 are also welcome.

Old browsers beware

Another encyclopaedia to hit cyberspace recently is the Jewish Encyclopedia, a twelve-volume work originally published between 1901 and 1906 [http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/]. The full content has been placed online, including articles and pictures. The encyclopaedia can be searched and covers Jewish history and biography, settlements and civilisations, folklore and anthropology, philosophy, literature and ethics. Since it is unedited, it does not cover modern Jewish history such as the creation of Israel or the Holocaust. The site warns that some pages may not fully load in older browsers.

No longer invisible web

Invisible web guru Gary Price has moved all his websites to new addresses recently. If you have looked for Direct Search, the News-Center, the Virtual Acquisition Shelf and News Desk [VAS & ND], and others and found them missing, then relax. Most of the sites have moved under the umbrella of FreePint and can be found there. Direct Search is now at http://www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm and the VAS&ND is at http://resourceshelf.freepint.com. Other sites can be accessed through links from Direct Search. Price's List of Lists has been updated and has moved to the Special Issues site [http://www.specialissues.com/lol/]. Most of the material on that site is chargeable, but the List of Lists is still free and includes 'best of' lists and rankings.

And lastly ...

Compiled by the National Library of New Zealand, the Te Puna Web directory [http://webdirectory.natlib.govt.nz/dir/en/nz/] is a subject guide to New Zealand web resources. Organised Yahoo-style, it provides an easy entry to New Zealand information on arts, business, government, education, media, health and other matters. ∎

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