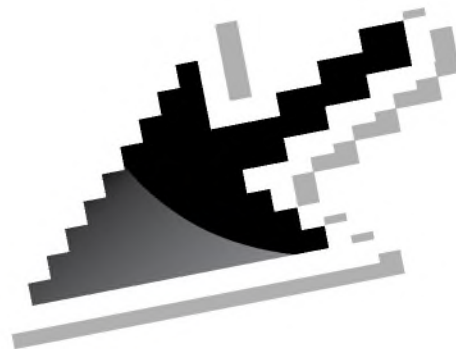


Webb's Web



More on my blog www.alia.org.au/webbsblog

An uncommon activity from a common carrier

I first came across Geoff Huston in the 90s when he was the driving force behind AARNet – and believe me, when he's at full throttle he can be quite forceful. On one occasion he asked me in an email what the hell I was doing (but in more elegant terms) with one of the facilities on offer. You don't forget such encounters. Since then – as I've written in the past – he's been drawing our attention to the need to move to the IPv6 protocol, with some success. His latest foray (at <http://www.potaroo.net/ispcol/2012-07/allyourpackets.html>) has been a critique of Telstra's interception of its customers' browsing activities a couple of months ago. You'll recall that they were recording what you looked at around the web and shipping this information off to an overseas company, and when asked about this a senior executive claimed that it was "a normal network operation". The way that people think that they can get away with such claims continues to astound me. Anyway, at the end of his piece, Geoff reaches a significant conclusion as to its legality, and I do wonder if anyone will choose to take this further.

Information to go

We've long ago moved past the point where we have to accept that people will access information in all sorts of ways – wherever, whenever, however they choose. I suspect that in the early days of internet-based online catalogues there were some grumpy old people wondering why people couldn't go to the library in person to look for the information they needed. As you'd expect, the National Library is leading the charge in keeping up with (and possibly

ahead of) trends in access and they've explained in some detail their Mobile Strategy (<http://www.nla.gov.au/mobile-strategy>) and just what are the assumptions surrounding it. Libraries all over the country will find it a useful tool in their own planning.

Data Journalism

I'm quite a fan of the various magazine shows on the ABC's Radio national – although I confess that sometimes I do get them a little confused. *The Media Report* program in July looked at Data Journalism (see or listen to it at <http://tinyurl.com/bq4j399>). One of the speakers, Cynthia O'Murchu, has been doing this sort of thing for a few years now and in 2010 she gave a pretty good talk (<http://vimeo.com/14714276>), although I was not too impressed with her lament about data formats were not at all what she wanted; she seemed to assume that repurposing data sets could be with a snap of the fingers. Back to *The Media Report*: it did feature a range of speakers from Australian and overseas (including one who was given a Pulitzer Prize for an early example of data journalism), and the examples they gave showed just what you can achieve in this area.

And finding the raw material

Laurence Millar at <http://tinyurl.com/cdfpwb5> has explored the phenomenon of Open Government Data and although his analogies occasionally stretch and strain to match the present situation, it does set you to thinking. Many of the current practitioners would agree that we're currently in the Hunter Gatherer phase, and look forward with keen anticipation to moving through Agriculture to City States and beyond – but he

does acknowledge that it's going to take some time to get there.

Recycling the e-book

At the Radar O'Reilly site (at <http://tinyurl.com/c3zf48l>), Joe Wikert explores a few aspects of the e-book ecosystem (it's funny that we've never thought of printed books having such a thing, but it's been there all the time of course). He makes the point – as have many others – that publishers need to work out the appropriate business model for the whole life of an e-book, and he suggests that Amazon might have some bright ideas on how to get the maximum return from them. Stay tuned.

To the point

There's an article on Salon at http://www.salon.com/2012/07/28/too_many_exclamation_points/ that examines the overuse of exclamation points in email communication. Although it wasn't quite what I expected, it does raise a few good points. I think that the people with whom I correspond are quite different from those of the author because I don't see many of these in my emails at all. (In fact, they're so uncommon in my inbox that I once received a request with one of them at the end and I was quite taken aback; so much so that I became reluctant to work with that person in the future. Just one of the limitations of the medium, I suppose.) After so many years, we take email communication for granted and only occasionally do we recognise that it's still evolving. Of course you don't see exclamation points much at all on Twitter; with only 140 characters to play with, you have to think twice before every keystroke.

 Posted by Kerry Webb