



Tales from the Terminal Room July/August 2006, Issue No. 72

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Tales from the Terminal Room (TFTTR) is a monthly newsletter, with the exception of July and August, and November and December, which are published as single issues. TFTTR includes reviews and comparisons of information sources; updates to the RBA Web site Business Sources and other useful resources; dealing with technical and access problems on the Net; and news of RBA's training courses and publications.

Tales from the Terminal Room can be delivered via email as plain text or as a PDF with active links. You can join the distribution list by going to <http://www.rba.co.uk/tftr/> and filling in the form. You will be sent an email asking you to confirm that you want to be added to the list. TFTTR is also available as an RSS feed. The URL for the feed is <http://www.rba.co.uk/rss/tftr.xml>

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Hard disc crash = lost emails ☹

Some of you will have noticed from the auto-replies to private messages sent to me that I have been on holiday for about 2 weeks. On my return I headed straight for my email and a couple of hours after I had downloaded two week's worth of messages my PC's hard disc crashed in spectacular fashion. Of course Sod's Law was in operation and I had also deleted the downloaded email from my ISP's server. Deleting everything from the mail server was a habit I developed in the early days of the Internet when ISPs charged an arm, a leg and several pints of blood to store more than a few kb of messages for more than a few days. A practice that I have now abandoned! Everything that I received up until midday 29th July was backed up but anything between then and midday August 15th has gone. So if you have sent me any emails during that period, especially requesting to be unsubscribed from the TftTR distribution list, please re-send them.

The good news is that everything else is back up and running on a new machine, thanks to regular and comprehensive backups.

Search Tools

Search Strategies 6th edition now available

The sixth edition of Search Strategies for the Internet is now available. Further details are available on the [RBA web site](http://www.rba.co.uk/publications/search.htm) (<http://www.rba.co.uk/publications/search.htm>) and, as with previous editions, updates can also be downloaded from the [web site](http://www.rba.co.uk/search/) (<http://www.rba.co.uk/search/>). Although the price of the publication itself remains the same - £35 for the ring binder version and £22 if you only want to purchase the pre-punched loose leaf pages - we are now having to charge for postage and packaging. In the past we have been able to absorb these costs but rates have increased considerably over the last two years and a new pricing structure is about to be introduced by Royal Mail. Details are on the web site.

With this edition we are offering an additional purchase option. You can immediately purchase and download a PDF version of the publication via [Lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) - <http://www.lulu.com/content/387312>, price US\$ 27.50. This is the first time we have used this service so feedback would be appreciated if you purchase via this route.

The structure of the publication remains essentially the same with section I outlining search tool essentials and key search techniques, section II detailing the major tools currently available, and search strategies are covered in section III. The summaries and comparison table, which are freely available, are in section IV.

I had a quick look at the contents pages of previous editions and when it comes to the major search engines the fifth edition covered Google, AlltheWeb, AltaVista, Gigablast, Teoma and HotBot. This time we have AlltheWeb Livesearch, Ask, Exalead, Gigablast, MSN Search and Yahoo Search. The first edition (published in early 1998) included the Yahoo directory, AltaVista, HotBot, Excite, Infoseek, Northern Light, Lycos, Euroferret and DejaNews. Google, officially launched on 7 September 1998, was a mere glint in Larry and Sergey's eye!

New version of Exalead in test

A new version of Exalead (<http://preview.exalead.com/search/>), one of my favourite search engines, is currently in beta test. The beta home page thankfully remains minimalist and uncluttered but has retained the short cut options that enable you to add other sites and search engines to your own personalised version of the page. Exalead say that they will be increasing the size of the web database from 4 to 8 billion pages and there is a separate image search option on the home page.

The major changes are on the Advanced Search and the results screens. The Advanced Search has been simplified and the phonetic search and approximate spelling have gone. A pity er, no they are still there but under 'What? More'. For heaven's sake, list them by default along with NEAR, Boolean search and the pattern matching/regular expression options! It was only when Phil Bradley mentioned their location in his blog

(http://philbradley.typepad.com/phil_bradleys_weblog/2006/08/exalead_beta.html) that I realised they had not been axed. And if I missed the link, so will a lot of other people. If you have never tried 'regular expression', it is a pattern matching search that you can use to mask one or more letters in the middle of a word. For example the search /psych.*ist/ will find psychologist, psychiatrist, psychotherapist etc. You start and end the word with a forward slash, and a full stop followed by an asterisk stands in for one or more letters. I find it very useful when searching on chemical names.

The results screen has also been simplified. To limit your search by language, file type, location, RSS feed, video or audio you now have to click on Refine your search on the right hand side of the screen. I think that is a mistake as I suspect that a lot of people will not bother to investigate it. Furthermore, because these options are not on the advanced search screen, they will think that Exalead's search functionality is limited. I know some people find the current results screen overpowering and confusing, but Exalead could at least restore the RSS, Video and Audio buttons to the results page and include the refine options in Advanced Search as well.

A new feature that I do like is the page preview button on the thumbnails next to the results. If you have opted to display text only results there is preview link included in each entry. Preview enables you to look at Exalead's own cached copy with your search terms highlighted. This has always been available but it has never been obvious how you do it.

As this is still in beta, changes are continually being made. Watch this space, as they say, for further developments.

Business Information - Top 10 Sites

It was a full house at UKeIG's workshop on Business Information on the Internet on July 12th. Sixteen people from commercial organisations, legal firms, government bodies, public libraries, university libraries and independent consultancies tried out some of the key resources on the web. At the end of the workshop they compiled a top 10 sources and sites. This is it:

1. [Yahoo Finance](http://uk.finance.yahoo.com/) <http://uk.finance.yahoo.com/> - excellent source of information on stock markets and share prices for the major markets around the world. For many of them there is 5-6 years of historical share price data available as graphs and in tabular form. The link given here goes to the UK and Ireland version, but there are links at the bottom of the page to other versions of Yahoo Finance around the world.
2. [Big Charts](http://www.bigcharts.com/) <http://www.bigcharts.com/> - data and charts covering the US and some other major markets around the world. To view the list of countries, click on the Global link in the top left hand area of the screen, close to the keyword search box. There is a useful range of charting options. Historical prices are available as charts (use the Java Chart option) and as individual data items for specific dates.
3. [US Census Bureau](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/) <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/> - quick access to macroeconomic data
4. [Bureau van Dijk](http://www.bvdep.com/) <http://www.bvdep.com/> - collection of company databases covering a wide range of countries. Priced service but free trials available. The Free Directory is a good way of identifying the location of a company and its subsidiaries, and for drawing up lists of companies by sector, size and country.
5. [Trade Association Forum](http://www.taforum.org/) <http://www.taforum.org/> - the TAF directory enables you to search for trade associations, guilds or federations by industry name or organisation name.

6. [UK Trade Invest](http://www.uktradeinvest.go.uk/) <http://www.uktradeinvest.go.uk/> - government organisation supporting both UK companies trading internationally and overseas enterprises seeking to locate in the UK. Market information can be browsed by sector and country
7. [Alacrawiki Spotlights](http://www.alacrawiki.com/) <http://www.alacrawiki.com/> - a guide to business information companies, publishers and databases. The Alacra Industry Spotlights in particular are extremely useful in providing reviews and commentary on industry specific web sites that have statistics, market research and news.
8. [OFFSTATS: Official Statistics on the Web](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/stats/offstats/) <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/stats/offstats/> - one of the best starting point for statistical sources by country, topic or subject. In the country lists, these are mainly sites provided by statistical offices, central banks and government departments and agencies. The topics list is comprised of links to the statistics pages of international organizations and associations, and a few commercial sites.
9. [Newsgator](http://www.newsgator.com/) <http://www.newsgator.com/> - web based RSS reader and aggregator. Ideal if you are new to RSS feeds and want to get a "feel" for how RSS works. Main advantage over Bloglines is that Newsgator supports user authentication, which is essential if you want to subscribe to feeds offered by priced services such as Factiva.
10. [Business Sources on the Internet](http://www.rba.co.uk/sources/) <http://www.rba.co.uk/sources/> - well, the participants had to include this one as it was the source for many of the notes for the day! Maintained by me (Karen Blakeman), it lists business resources by type (e.g. Financials, statistics, news). As they were sort of brainwashed throughout the day into using it, I am going to add an eleventh site to this list.

[newsBriefsOman - news and comment about Oman](http://www.newsbriefsoman.info/) <http://www.newsbriefsoman.info/>
Maintained by [Sue Hutton](http://www.suehutton.co.uk/) (<http://www.suehutton.co.uk/>) this is a very nice site providing news and information on Oman, royal decrees, Omani officials. Down the right hand side of the screen is an extensive list of links to key resources that are invaluable to anyone wanting to do business in the area. What is not immediately obvious is that the site uses blogging technology. As well as having good quality content, this is an excellent example of how one can use a blog to develop a site.

Internet Librarian International 2006

<http://www.internet-librarian.com/>

A reminder that the Internet Librarian International conference takes place at the Copthorne Tara Hotel in London on 16-17 October. The emphasis will be on discovering new resources and demystifying new technology. The main topics include:

- Blogs, Wikis and Collaboration Tools
- Information Organisation and Discovery
- E-Learning and Teaching
- Global Best Practices
- Digital Libraries and Resources
- Innovative Information Environments
- Web Research Skills and Resources
- Technology for Libraries

I shall be giving a presentation on 'Out-Googling Google: Finding What Google Misses' in the Internet Research Intricacies track on Tuesday 16th. The full conference programme is available at <http://www.internet-librarian.com/>.

CILIP, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, is again supporting Internet Librarian International as Association Sponsor and CILIP members benefit from a 20% discount on the full conference registration.

Information Resources

Russia: All Regions Trade and Investment Guide

'Russia: All Regions Trade & Investment Guide', which was mentioned in June's Tales from the Terminal Room, now has its own web site at <http://www.russiasregions.com/> with a free sample region (Moscow). If you only want data on one or two regions, there are now options on the Order page for purchasing them as individual PDF files (£20 each).

Alacra Store launches RSS alerts

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

Alacra have always been keen to try out and use the newer technologies - they already have a blog and a wiki - and now Alacra Store is offering free RSS feeds on all of its Company Snapshots. Anyone can subscribe to company-specific RSS feeds containing credit and investment research from premium content publishers such as CreditSights, Moody's Investors Service, and Thomson Financial. You simply search by company, click on the RSS button on the Company Snapshot page, and add the URL to your feed reader. The alerts are free but you will have to pay to view the full documents. Alacra Store works on a pay per view basis so you don't have to worry about hefty up front subscriptions - just get your credit card out.

In addition to the company-specific feeds, there are several publisher-specific feeds that enable you to track all of the latest content from a given provider:

CreditSights -

<http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/creditsights>

Fitch Ratings -

<http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/fitch-ratings>

Moody's Investors Service -

<http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/moodys>

Newstex - <http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/newstex>

TF Investext -

<http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/tf-investext>

Thomson StreetEvents -

<http://www.alacrastore.com/storecontent/publisher-rss/thomson-streetevents>

Even better would be the ability to have RSS feeds that monitor a company name within a provider, for example Lukoil in Newstex, but this is a good start. I wish more premium information providers offered RSS alerts.

Adverteyes UK – Advertising Slogans Database

<http://www.adverteyes.biz/>

Adverteyes is a database of who's said what, where and when in advertisements. It includes endlines, slogans, straplines, taglines and trademarks that are currently appearing or have appeared in the UK, Ireland and the USA media. Data from unique campaigns in Canada, Australia, India and South Africa is now being added. The database is intended to provide assurance that a proposed ad line will not infringe on the current use of that line by others. It also provides information on current overly used advertising themes and on what specific brands have 'said' through the years. The most recent 100 straplines added to the database can be viewed free of charge but you need to subscribe to search the whole database. The annual subscription is currently £19.95

You can search using phrases or keywords that appear in the slogan combined with a product category such as airlines or foods. Alternatively you can just select a category. You cannot search directly by brand name or company - these are only picked up if they appear in the slogan. The results give the "line", brand name, product category, product, media (print, radio, television, outdoor, other), year and country. The results are listed by ad line in alphabetical order but you can re-sort them by brand name.

The screenshot shows the Adverteyes website interface. At the top, it says 'Database records: 50197'. There are navigation links for Home, About, Services, FAQs, Sitemap, Contact, and Disclaimer. The main search area has a search box with 'Guinness' entered, a 'Product Category' dropdown menu, and a 'Submit' button. To the right, there is a banner with the text 'Who's said what, where and when!' and 'We specialise in endline, slogan, strapline, tagline and trademark research.' Below the search area, there is a table titled 'Main Data' showing search results for Guinness.

Line	Brand Name	Product Category	Product	Media	Year	Country
200 years of Guinness. What a lovely long drink.	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1959	Ireland
A Guinness a day keeps the doctor away.	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1967	UK
After work you need a Guinness.	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beers	P	1961	UK
Cold Guinness Pure Genius	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1951	UK
Cool Guinness - cool one pound.	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1965	UK
Draught Guinness for you.	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1967	UK
Five million Guinness ads	Guinness	Alcoholic drinks	beer	P	1960	UK

The database goes back to the 1950's and '60's, and it is interesting to see what advertisers could get away with at that time. There was the famous - or should that be infamous? - "Guinness is good for you" but Guinness also ran a campaign claiming that "a Guinness a day keeps the doctor away"!

Automotive World re-brands

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

Automotive World, started by the Financial Times in 1990, has re-launched its web site and now incorporates 'AWKnowledge' and 'AWResearcher'. Automotive World's subscriptions include daily updates on 12 key automotive sectors and 37 OEMs globally. Printed research publications include The Automotive Quarterly Review, and the World Car and World Truck reports.

Forthcoming research titles will cover detailed OEM forward model insight and merger and acquisition strategies of the supply base. The full text of the articles and reports are available to subscribers only but you can view the headlines free of charge. There is a free RSS feed of industry headlines, but again, the full text of the stories are available to subscribers only. Free trials are available.

Chemistry Central launched

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

For the chemists amongst you, Chemistry Central is a new open access website for chemists bringing together peer-reviewed research in chemistry from a range of open access journals. All the original research articles on Chemistry Central are made freely and permanently accessible online immediately upon publication. Chemistry Central has been developed by the same team who created BioMed Central (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/>).

Chemistry Central includes open access articles from Geochemical Transactions and from the Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry, which is published by the Beilstein Institut in association with BioMed Central. It also features chemistry-related articles published in BioMed Central's biological and medical journals, including BMC Pharmacology, BMC Biochemistry and BMC Chemical Biology. Further open access chemistry journals will be launched in the near future, including Chemistry Central Journal, which will cover all areas of chemistry, broken down into discipline-specific sections. Chemists who wish to support open access to published research by playing an editorial role on this major new journal should contact editorial@chemistrycentral.com.

Chemistry Central is part of the Open Access Central (www.openaccesscentral.com) family of sites which currently includes BioMed Central and PhysMath Central.

TechXtra now independent

<http://www.techxtra.ac.uk/>

TechXtra is a free source of information in engineering, mathematics and computing and is now an independent service. Previously connected with the EEVL gateway, TechXtra is an initiative of the ICBL and the Library at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. TechXtra is based around a search engine that provides access to the freely available full-text content of millions of articles, key websites, theses and dissertations, books, industry news, new job announcements, technical reports, eprints, learning & teaching resources and the latest research, in engineering, mathematics and computing. Where the full-text is not freely available, TechXtra provides links to vendors for pay-per-view options. In addition, free trade magazine subscriptions and technical document downloads, job announcements, industry news, new books, information about offshore engineering publications and newsletters are available.

The basic search offers keyword searching combined with categories such as books, industry news, latest research. The Advanced Search offers various keyword options (all the words, phrase, any of the words, without the words) and options for selecting Special Collections for example Directory of Open access Journals, CiteSeer – Computer and Information Science Articles, NASA Technical Reports.

Some of TechXtra's resources will not be picked up by the standard search engines, or you may have to wade through volumes of murk and mire before you find them. I tried it out on some of my test searches relating to the energy sector, in particular on deep drilling and the origins of petroleum, and was impressed with its speed and relevance. TechExtra is now in my list of key search tools for this area.

Searching Questions

Google inconsistencies

Question:

I monitor various sites for grants. I run my searches in Google, Yahoo etc and use the site command plus keywords or phrases that I know appear on the site. I am intermittent problems with one of my searches in Google. It is the one I run on the UK's Charity Commission web site:

site:www.charity-commission.gov.uk "makes grants to organisations"

Some of the time I get no results at all or the results are from anywhere and everywhere! At other times the results are from the Charity Commission web site but mostly from the Welsh language version of the site. What is Google playing at?

Answer:

The most important thing to remember as far as Google is concerned is that it is not consistent. They are always changing the way sites are indexed, how the database is searched and trying out new algorithms to sort the results. Add to that the fact that there are hundreds of Google servers around the world, which vary in how up to date they are, and that you can never tell which server your query is run on and it is not surprising that your results are unpredictable. The first time I tried your search in Google, your strategy came up with thousands of hits only from the Charity Commission but, as you say, most of them were in Welsh. On the second attempt, Google came up with zero! Over the next couple of hours I ran your search 20 times and the zero results screen came up three times.

Once the results list – or no results list! – is displayed a good way to check what Google is doing with your search is to click on the Advanced Search link. I found that when Google did come up with results it was behaving as expected: "makes grants to organisations" was placed in the phrase box and www.charity-commission.gov.uk was in the domain box. When Google came up with no results it was putting the phrase in the 'All the words' box with hyphens between the individual words and the site in the phrase box as 'site www charity commission gov uk'. Note that it had lost all the punctuation from the strategy. So, on these occasions, it appears that Google is trying to be clever and identify phrases in your strategy and probably depends on which of its many servers Google runs your search. But I have no idea why it is always giving preference to the Welsh language version.

Gizmo of the Month

NetMeter

<http://readerror.gmxhome.de/>

So you're considering who to sign up with for your broadband connection at home. Or perhaps your current service provider isn't cutting the mustard and you want to change. But there could be a problem. Many of the cheap offers cap your usage. There you are, in the middle of listening to Radio 4's Material World while bashing away at a tedious procedure document, and you're cut off; or your connection stays up for the rest of the month but you are hit with a hefty surcharge. NetMeter is a neat little free program that will monitor your upload and download traffic, and total your usage by day, week and month. If you are already using a capped service you can set up a volume alert that is triggered when the traffic over your connection approaches the 'danger zone'.

This program only works on single PCs so if you are already on broadband and have a wi-fi

system with two or more computers connecting to it, you will have to install NetMeter on each computer and add up the figures from them at the end of the month. It is easy to underestimate the amount of bandwidth you consume so prepare to be amazed – or even horrified!

Meetings and Workshops

Workshop: Developing and managing e-book collections

Organiser: UKeIG

Venue: Training Room 1, Dublin City University, Dublin

Date: Tuesday, 12th September 2006, 9.30 – 16.30

Course presenters: Chris Armstrong, Ray Lonsdale

Course fee: UKeIG members £150 + VAT (£176.25); Non UKeIG, non ANLTC members £180 + VAT (£211.50). ANLTC members: A limited number of ANLTC subsidised places are available at €100 (incl VAT) on a strictly first come first served basis. Once these places have been allocated then ANLTC members will be invoiced at the same rate as UKeIG members.

URL: http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2006_09_12_ebook.html

Outline: This course opens the door to a new electronic format. In the last six years, there has been an unprecedented growth in the publishing of e-books with an increasing array of different types available for all sectors. The programme will give you the opportunity to explore a range of different e-books including a range of commercially-published and free reference works, monographs, textbooks, and fiction. Examples will include individual titles and also collections of e-books, such as those offered by NetLibrary and Oxford University Press. The course will also facilitate consideration of the new opportunities e-books offer for librarians and users, and the significant collection management and promotional issues which challenge information and library staff.

Workshop: Knowledge Management: the next generation

Organiser: UKeIG

Venue: CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE

Date: Friday 22nd September 2006, 9.30 – 16.30

Course presenter: Chris Collison

Course fee: UKeIG members £130 + VAT (£152.75); others £160 + VAT (£188.00)

URL: <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/september06/km.html>

Outline: Chris Collison, Author of “Learning to Fly”, provides an interactive course, designed to explore ways in which we can help knowledge management to mature in our organizations. Chris will take a rounded view of knowledge management, exploring such topics as structuring captured knowledge, tools and processes for learning, communities of practice, leadership behaviours and embedding knowledge management into company processes. These tools and processes will be illustrated using examples, videos, mini case-studies and group discussion.

Workshop: Business Information on the Net: Free vs. Fee

Organiser: TFPL

Venue: Times Square, 160 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BF

Date: Wednesday, 27th September 2006

Course presenter: Karen Blakeman

Course fee: £295 +VAT (total £346.63)

URL: <http://www.tfpl.com/>

Outline: To pay or not to pay for business information is a question that faces many users of the Net. This one day course compares what is available for free with pay-as-you-go and subscription services and will examine quality of content, coverage, functionality and price. There will be practical sessions throughout the day and delegates will receive comprehensive notes.

Workshop: Untangling Your Web: Effective Web Site Management

Organiser: Manchester Business School

Venue: Eddie Davies Library, Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK

Date: Wednesday, 11th October 2006

Course presenter: Karen Blakeman

Course fee: £250 + VAT or £215 + VAT for BIS/BINN members.

URL: <http://www.mbs.ac.uk/programmes/courses-seminars/management-research.htm>

Outline: Whether you already have a web site or are in the process of setting one up, keeping it in pristine condition and ensuring that your organisation benefits to the full can drive you to distraction. Once it is operational it is all too easy too easy to forget about it; but out of date pages and inaccurate information are bad news! This course looks at how to painlessly manage the process of keeping your web site up to date, how to identify key areas that can drive your business forward, and how to encourage visitors to come back for more.

Contact Information

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