Tales from the Terminal Room
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http://www.rba.co.uk/tfttr/

Tales from the Terminal Room (TFTTR) is a monthly newsletter, with the exception of July and August, which are published as a single issue. TFTTR includes reviews and comparisons of information sources and search engines; 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. Many of the articles included in TFTTR will already have appeared in Karen Blakeman's blog at http://www.rba.co.uk/rss/blog.htm.

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/tfttr/ 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/tfttr.xml
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In this issue:

Search Tools

Accoona home page tabs are back

http://www.accoona.com/ or http://www.accoona.eu/

Well, everyone's blog postings and emailed complaints about the missing home page tabs on Accoona seem to have worked. (See Tales from the Terminal Room December 2006 and http://rba.co.uk/rss/2006/12/accoona-loses-news.html). Accoona have now restored the web, news and business search options on its home page alongside a new 'All' option.

CrossEngine

http://www.crossengine.com/

CrossEngine is a search tool similar to Trovando (http://www.trovando.it/). You type in your search terms just once and then click on each search engine in turn to run the search. The search tools are grouped under tabs by type, for example standard, video, images, news, blogs. Two groupings that CrossEngine has but Trovando does not are Formats, which enables you to search for file types such as PowerPoint or Excel, and Social covering services such as Delicious, Furl and Squidoo. Audio search is included under Formats, which I find a bit odd. It makes more sense to me for that to have its own tab or be included with video as it is in Trovando. Overall, a neat interface for running your search in several different tools one by one.

Internet Librarian International 2007 Call for Speakers

http://www.internet-librarian.com/CallForSpeakers.shtml

New Realities, Roles and Resources
Internet Librarian International 2007
8-9 October 2007. Copthorne Tara Hotel, London
Call for speakers deadline: 30 March 2007

Information Today invites proposals for presentations at Internet Librarian International 2007: New Realities, Roles and Resources, taking place at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, London, UK on 8 - 9 October 2007. They are looking for a mix of papers for conference sessions, workshops and short

tutorials. The emphasis is on the practical rather than theoretical and they are seeking case studies and proposals about initiatives in your organisation, not product pitches or overviews.

To be considered as a speaker, please submit your ideas at http://www.internet-librarian.com/CallForSpeakers.shtml where there is also a list of possible topics.

The Advisory Committee will review all submissions and notification regarding acceptance will be made this summer. If your proposal is selected, the primary speaker will receive a free registration to the full conference, which includes lunches and a reception. The organisers are not responsible for speakers' travel and accommodation costs.

Information Resources

Thomson to sell Profound and NewsEdge

Thomson have announced that "after carefully analyzing our product portfolio, we have decided to realign specific services within Business Intelligence Services. Our goal is to best align our products and resources to the markets and customers we serve." They are selling Market Research (Profound) and NewsEdge and say they are currently in discussions with potential buyers. The News Research service will be discontinued from December 31, 2007 and the Broker Research and Insite services are being moved from Thomson Business Intelligence to Thomson Financial.

I am not really surprised by their decision to sell Profound. I have not used it for several years but many people who have attended my workshops have not been impressed by it. Complaints have included inconsistent and irreproducible search results, complex pricing, and disappearing titles and publishers. As for their news services, they rarely fare well when compared against Factiva and LexisNexis.

TechXtra expanded coverage

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

TechXtra, a free service for finding material in engineering, mathematics and computing, has added new sources to its cross-search. It is now possible to search across 31 major collections (over 4 million items) for articles, eprints, technical reports, books, theses & dissertations, teaching & learning resources, the latest industry news and job announcements.

In addition, TechXtra has partnered with GlobalSpec to offer a free Patents and Standards search facility. There are also new, free, trade magazine subscriptions.

The new collections now covered by TechXtra's cross-search include:

- Emerald - TechXtra indexes a subset of Emerald Journals relevant to Engineering & Materials Science. Around 6,000 articles are indexed from approximately 15 Journals. Full text content is available to Emerald subscribers, or by pay-per-view.
- JORUM - a searchable repository of learning and teaching resources for academic and support staff in the UK. TechXtra indexes around 1,500 JORUM objects. An Athens username and password are required to access the actual resources.
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Virtual Library - TechXtra indexes a sample subset file from the ICE Virtual Library of papers produced between 1836-1998. Over 5,500 papers are indexed (including the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers). Full text content is available by subscription, or by pay-per-view.

These collections join arXiv, CISTI, CiteSeer, DOAJ, Inderscience, IoP, NASA Technical Reports, and many more in the TechXtra cross-search. For a full list of the collections covered by TechXtra, see: http://www.techxtra.ac.uk/index.html?action=collectiondetails
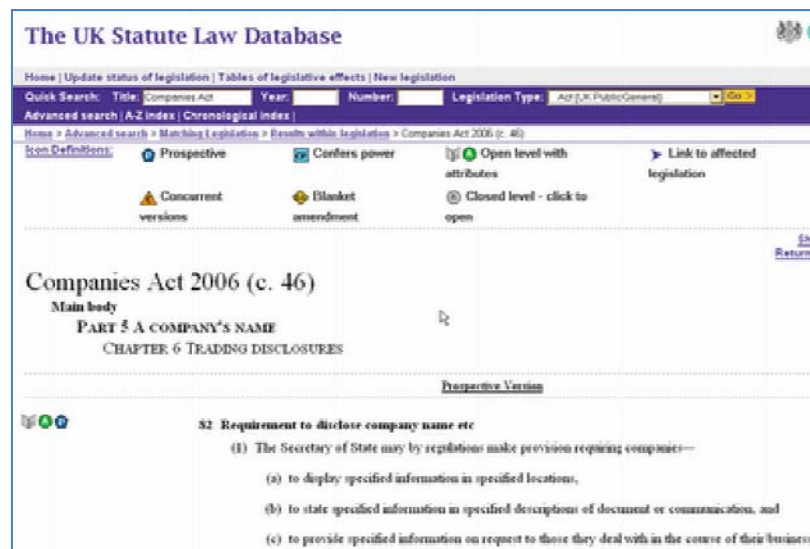
UK Statute Law Database

http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/

The UK Statute Law Database (SLD), which is the official revised edition of the primary legislation of the United Kingdom, has been made available free of charge online. The official press release is on the Department of Constitutional Affairs web site (http://tinyurl.com/2o8vuh). Most legislation that is currently in force has been published on the web site with some exceptions. For 2006 they specifically mention The Armed Forces Act 2006 and The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (N.I. 21). I cannot think of two more diverse pieces of information to omit! I am told by colleagues that there are other gaps but the site admits to this and there are details of what is still be added.

On the home page you can search for text in the title, by year, number and legislation type. There is also an A-Z index and a chronological index. The Advanced Search has additional options that include date ranges, geographical extent and text search. The earliest legislation I could find is the Statute of Marlborough 1267 "made at Marlborough in the Presence of our Lord King Henry, and Richard King of the Romans, and the Lord Edward eldest Son of the said King Henry, and the Lord Ottobon, at that Time Legate in England". It includes "Remedy against Accountants. Farmers shall do no Waste. Remedy thereon." I shall leave you to find out for yourselves what that is all about.

As well as reading the full text of the legislation you can view amended legislation as it has changed over time and sections that have yet to come into force. A green "A" icon links to the "attributes" of the legislation, such as start date and extent, and enables you to move between versions. The blue "P" icon indicates provisions, and versions of amended provisions, that have not yet been brought into force. I found this particularly useful for checking when parts of the Companies Act 2006 come into force. If you are viewing older legislation that has been amended, a box warns you of the fact.

Is this database going to make access to UK legislation easier? If you know your way around the structure of Statute Law, then yes. Those who do not and who have never had to do battle with Acts, Statutory Instruments and the like will not be any the wiser. If you just want to read or download a copy of a particular Act then the Office of Public Sector Information at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts.htm will probably be quicker, and it now has RSS feeds for alerting you to new Acts and Statutory Instruments. Bills currently before the UK Parliament are available on the UK Parliament web site at http://www.parliament.uk/ (email alerts only). Command Papers and departmental House of Commons Papers are at http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/ (RSS feed available).

UK Government to close down some of its web sites

The UK Government is closing 95 per cent of its web sites in what it claims is a drive to make important information more readily accessible for internet users. The cuts will save £9 million and are part of what they call a "Transformational Government Strategy". The official press release, which is short on detail, can be found at
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2007/070110_ciostrategy.asp

There have been several postings on the LIS-Profession http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-Profession.html discussion list during January 2007 and Stella Dextre Clarke forwarded further information from Linda Humphries of the Delivery and Transformation Group to the list:

"The Times' figures are based on an extrapolation of the ratio of how many sites have agreed to close and those that are definitely to be retained (e.g. departments' corporate websites) – 26 to date. There are still 374 sites to be reviewed. Of the 951 sites reviewed by their departments, 90 have already closed and 461 are planned to close. The Times' figures are based on an extrapolation of the ratio of how many sites have agreed to close and those that are definitely to be retained (e.g. departments' corporate websites) – 26 to date. There are still 374 sites to be reviewed. The information currently held on sites that are closing will be migrated to Directgov, Business Link or the departments' corporate sites as appropriate. This will result in a reduction of the number of locations in which information for citizens and businesses is held, rather than reducing the amount of information available."

There is now a PDF list of the sites to be closed available at
http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/annual_report2006/website_list.pdf

Looking through the list I noted several web sites for various marketing boards that I thought had long gone. I also see that www.tradeinfo.com is for the chop. The URL rang a very loud clanging bell in my head and I found it on my own list of statistics sources. My comments on the interactive data tables, which are for me the most useful section of the site, currently are "I strongly recommend that you download and view the PowerPoint demonstration first". Ah yes, it is all coming back to me now. I had another look at it today and it still takes me ages to work out how to track down data. Whether the information will be any easier to access via other UK government sites, or if it will just disappear into a Whitehall black hole, remains to be seen.

Sources of Non-Official Statistics

http://tinyurl.com/yojty6 (This link takes you to Gower Publishing and further details on the book).

David Mort's invaluable directory 'Sources of Non-Official UK Statistics' has been updated. It provides details of over 900 publications and services produced by trade associations, professional bodies, banks, consultancies, employers' federations, forecasting organizations and others, together with statistics appearing in trade journals and periodicals. Titles and services are listed alphabetically by publisher and each entry contains information, where available, on subject, content and source of statistics, together with frequency, availability and cost, and address, telephone, email and web site details. The sixth edition includes 180 new entries covering sources of information that are exclusively available on the internet.

Highly recommended if you regularly search for UK statistics on any subject

Hardcover: 430 pages
Publisher: Gower Publishing Limited; 6Rev Ed edition (17 Aug 2006)
ISBN-10: 0566087154
ISBN-13: 978-0566087158
Price: £75

Market Research on the Web – special offer

http://www.marketresearchontheweb.com/

IRN Research is offering a special introductory annual subscription to their Market Research on the Web (MROW) database. The special offer is £100 and applies to single user corporate subscribers, academic and public library users. A free trial is available covering the food and drink sector.

MROW is a searchable database of sources of market data, industry reports, company lists, statistics, industry news, legislation, and links to over 4,500 evaluated UK and European Web sites. The sites are categorised by organisation type for example trade association, professional bodies, market research publishers, market research agencies, magazines/journals, Government sites, gateways/portals.

I have subscribed to this service since it was first launched and was a regular user when it was still free of charge. The main advantage of the service for me is that it saves me so much time when I am looking for industry statistics or directories of members/companies on trade and professional association web sites. I pride myself that my search skills can track down relevant sites without the help of MROW, but I then have to visit and navigate each site in turn. All too often I find that the site does not give stats on their sector or does not have a directory. MROW tells me straight away if there are stats or market data, if there is a directory of members/companies, availability of news and press releases, and if there is information on relevant legislation and technical data. MROW finds in a couple of minutes what would normally take me about half an hour to track down the Google et al way.

MROW also provides a Guide to Market Data and Statistics - a searchable database of statistical and market research terminologies, classifications, and concepts. This is a great resource for checking on market research jargon.

Beer Institute
URL: www.beerinstitute.org
E-mail: info@beerinstitute.org.
Statistics/Market Data: Yes
Directories: Yes
News/Press Releases: Yes
Legislation/Technical Data: Yes
Links: Yes
Online Access to Statistics/Reports for a Fee: No
Ordering Facilities for Statistics/Reports: No

British Beer & Pub Association
URL: www.beerandpub.com
E-mail: web@beerandpub.com
Statistics/Market Data: Yes
Directories: No
News/Press Releases: Yes
Legislation/Technical Data: Yes
Links: Yes
Online Access to Statistics/Reports for a Fee: No
Ordering Facilities for Statistics/Reports: No

Home Beer & Wine Manufacturers Association
Statistics/Market Data: No
Directories: Yes

The Blog - another tool in your arsenal

http://www.llrx.com/features/lawblogarsenal.htm

This is a very useful article by Janet Peros, legal reference librarian and co-chair of the Law Library Association of Greater New York's education committee. It outlines the use of blogs and RSS feeds in several US legal firms, and how they have been used to replace newsletters for keeping partners and clients up to date. In some instances the mini case-studies mention the software and services used to publish the blogs and generate feeds. The motivation and reasoning behind the decisions to switch from conventional alerting services that are discussed in this article are relevant to any type of organisation in any country. The article is a good source of ammunition for those of us in the process of persuading colleagues and managers that blogs and RSS are a good idea!

Searching Questions

Refining blog searches and RSS feeds

Question:

I have finally got to grips with using blogs and RSS feeds to monitor what is being said about our own and our competitor's products. The problem is that I have a handful of blogs in my list of RSS feeds that only occasionally mention the products in which I am interested, but when they do they contain important comments and feedback. Although it does not take very long to scan the list of headlines it is an effort trying to spot the one in fifty that is relevant. Is there a better way of homing in on relevant items?

Answer:

There are two ways you can tackle this. You do not say which feed reader you are using, but check if you can set up rules or filters to monitor the feeds as they come in for the product names in which you are interested. You can then tell the reader to 'flag' them in some way, tag them or place a copy in a separate folder. Depending on the software you use, and if it is a PC based application, you may also be able to request an alert to your desktop (visual and/or audio) if the information is especially important and time dependent.

The second approach is not to take the whole RSS feed for the blog but to carry out a search on that blog for your key words and set up an RSS alert on that search. Have a look at the Advanced Search options in blog tools such as http://www.google.com/blogsearch, http://www.technorati.com/ and http://www.blogpulse.com/. They have options for combining your keywords with a blog URL or title. Then 'subscribe' to the RSS alert for your search.

Meetings and Workshops

Workshop: Selecting and Implementing Web and Intranet Search
Organiser: UKeiG
Venue: CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE
Date: Thursday, 22nd February 2007, 9.30 – 16.30
Presenter: Martin White
Course fee: UKeiG members £130 + VAT (£152.75); others £160 + VAT (£188.00)
URL: http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2007/february/search.html
Outline: This workshop provides practical advice on selecting, installing and implementing search for web sites and intranets. The opening sessions of the workshop explain how search technology works, an essential precursor to understanding how to get the best from commercial and open

source search software. The workshop then goes on to illustrate the importance of the design and usability of the search results pages, and highlights the similarities and differences between searching web sites and searching intranets. Desk top and enterprise search applications will also be discussed. Note that this workshop does not cover search engine optimization.

Workshop: Advanced Internet Search Strategies
Organiser: Manchester Business School, UK
Venue: Eddie Davies Library, Manchester Business School
Date: Wednesday 25th April 2007, 9.30 – 16.30
Presenter: Karen Blakeman
Course fee: BIS/BINN members £215 + VAT; others £250 + VAT
URL: http://www.mbs.ac.uk/programmes/courses-seminars/management-research.htm
Outline: With the major search engines claiming coverage of up to and over 20 billion web pages in their databases, it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate relevant information. Google is not the only search tool and the competition is hotting up. This workshop looks at recent developments at Google and the alternatives, especially the new kids on the block. Delegates will have ample opportunity to test out advanced search techniques and to compare different search engines. There will also be sessions on blogs and RSS feeds, and help on tracking down audio, video and podcasts of news broadcasts and interviews. A significant part of the day will be taken up with practical sessions; exercises will be provided but delegates are free to try out searches of their own.

Workshop: RSS, Blogs and Wikis
Organiser: UKeiG
Presenter: Karen Blakeman
Course fee: UKeiG members £150 + VAT (£176.25); others £180 + VAT (£211.50)
URL: http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/
There are three dates for this workshop:
Friday April 27th 2007, 9.30 – 16.30, Kings College London, Guy's Campus, London Bridge, London
Thursday 10th May 2007, 9.30-16.30, Wolfson Teaching Room, Edinburgh University Library
Thursday May 17th 2007, 9.30 – 16.30, Kings College London, Guy's Campus, London Bridge, London

All three are currently fully booked but there may be cancellations. Please contact Christine Baker (cabaker@ukeig.org.uk, tel/fax 01969 625751) to be put on the reserve list.

Outline: Without realising it you are probably already using RSS, blogs and wikis – all Web 2.0 technologies. Awareness of them amongst users will increase as Microsoft incorporates RSS and blogging into Office 2007, Outlook and IE 7 so don't get left behind. This workshop will cut through the jargon and hype and suggest ways in which you can use them as information sources, tools of collaboration or as part of your information delivery strategy. It will look at how they can be used to manage projects, provide users with current awareness, generate newsletters, and promote your expertise to colleagues, users and clients. There is a substantial practical element to the workshop giving you a chance to try out all three technologies, assess their relevance, and consider how you can implement them within your organisation.

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Archives

TFTTR archives: http://www.rba.co.uk/tfttr/archives/

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