



Tales from the Terminal Room October 2007, Issue No. 81

Editor: Karen Blakeman

Published by: RBA Information Services

ISSN 1467-338X

<http://www.rba.co.uk/tfttr/>

Tales from the Terminal Room (TFTTR) is an electronic newsletter that includes reviews and comparisons of information sources; useful tools for managing information; technical and access problems on the Net; and news of RBA's training courses and publications. Many of the items and articles will have already appeared on Karen Blakeman's Blog at <http://www.rba.co.uk/wordpress/>

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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Search Tools

Live.com link commands are back

[Live.com](#)'s link and link domain commands are back. There is one important change to the command. You have to precede both the link: and the linkdomain: commands with a plus sign. For example, to find pages that link to the UKeiG's training and meetings page you would type in:

```
+link:www.ukeig.org.uk/training/
```

To find pages that link to anywhere on the UKeiG web site you would type in:

```
+linkdomain:www.ukeig.org.uk
```

Google has a link command which is virtually useless as it lists a small fraction of the pages that link to your starting page. Yahoo has both a link and linkdomain command but my experience is that they do not list as many pages as Live.com. This suggests to me that Live's database of web pages is larger than Yahoo's.

The link commands are extremely useful in tracking down pages or sites that are similar to one that you already have, the principle being that pages of similar content and type generally link to one another. It is also a great way of identifying links and networks between companies and organisations.

Search engine overlap and the perils of phrase searching

Greg Notess has posted an interesting [screencast on his blog](#) (http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/blog/2007/09/salaries_overlap_and_the_peril.shtml) that demonstrates the importance of trying search engines other than Google. It also shows that you can miss information if you use long phrases and that you may be better off breaking down your phrase into smaller chunks.

Google Reader now has Search

.. but not on my PC 😞

According to the [Google Reader Blog](#) (<http://googlereader.blogspot.com/2007/09/we-found-it.html>) the new search box is located directly above the reading panel to the right of the Google Reader logo. A pity I can't see it here in Firefox. According to the blog it lets you search your subscribed feeds. If you want to do a blog search outside of your feeds then get thee hence to [Google Blogsearch](#) (<http://www.google.com/blogsearch/>)

A quick check in Opera, my second browser of choice, revealed nothing. A totally blank page! I did, however, manage to spot the elusive search box in IE 7 and it seems to do what it claims.

Facebook Profiles to be Googled

.....unless you say otherwise.

If you have recently logged on to Facebook you will have spotted the announcement that people can now search for your profile from Facebook's Welcome page and that "in a few weeks, it [your profile] may also be found through search engines like Google."

The stuff that I have on my profile can be found on my web site and blog - in fact a lot **more** information can be found about me on both of those - so I am not that worried. Those of you who **are** concerned about it may want to start removing any information that, in retrospect, you think was not such a good idea to divulge after all! The announcement has a link to the Search Privacy

page where you can untick the public search engine box. Anyone who does discover your public search listing must register and log in to contact you via Facebook, and public search listings will only contain names and profile pictures. Hmm ... maybe it wasn't that sensible to upload that photo taken at the Online Information conference dinner last year.

Internet Librarian International 2007 - Presentations

The ILI 2007 presentations are now up on the ILI site at <http://www.internet-librarian.com/Presentations/>. You can also download a copy my PowerPoint presentation from <http://www.rba.co.uk/ili/ILI2007KarenBlakeman.ppt>. I have added a slide, or rather re-instated a slide that I had deleted because of time constraints, as a result of a comment from Patrick Danowski after the presentation. It is the one showing Exalead's Wikipedia search interface and tag cloud. The interesting feature of the tag cloud is that the tags/keywords are colour coded depending on whether they are people's names, companies/organisations, geographical locations etc. The slides are mostly screen shots so will not make much sense to those of you who were not at the presentation.

Patrick Danowski experimented with 'Twittering' ILI 2007. Go to <http://twitter.com/PatrickD> to see the results. Interesting approach and a good way to capture all the keywords/phrases as they are being uttered rather than trying to do a full blog posting that may not be published for several hours.

Information Resources

EdgarScan withdrawn

Price Waterhouse Coopers' EdgarScan is no longer available on the public web. This was an excellent service that repackaged SEC EDGAR filings (<http://www.sec.gov/>) and had some very useful analysis options. Another free alternative is SEC Info at <http://www.secinfo.com/>, which is much easier and quicker to use than sec.gov.

FT offers 30 free views a month

The Financial Times (<http://www.ft.com/>) has introduced a new monthly 'free views'. If you are an unregistered user you can view just 5 articles free of charge but this increases to 30 if you register. If you want to read more, you are prompted to subscribe for further access. At present, the standard annual personal subscription fee is £98.99. A new Corporate Content Licence will be made available in April 2008.

Telegraph Business Club

The Daily Telegraph Business Club (<http://www.telegraphbusinessclub.co.uk/>) aims to help SMEs through weekly case studies, information, free seminars and membership discounts. Registration is free and the club has a page every Tuesday in the Business Section of the Daily Telegraph. There is quite a lot to work your way through on the home page but the main tabs and headings are Strategy, Money, People, Sales, Technology and Operations. The Advanced Search is probably the best way to track down information in the archives as it enables you to search by category, for example legislation, and type of resource. The only really negative aspect of this site for me is the irritating news ticker scrolling across the screen near the top of the page. Luckily I use Firefox as my browser so I was able to 'Remove it Permanently' with the RIP add-on. The ticker really does not add much in the way of content to the site and becomes extremely annoying after a few minutes.

ITU-T recommendations now free of charge

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has made over 3000 ITU-T recommendations available free of charge following a trial of the new service. The standards are used by equipment manufacturers, telecommunication network operators and service providers throughout the world.

According to the ITU [press release](http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2007/21.html) (http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2007/21.html):

Mr Malcolm Johnson, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), presented the results of the trial to the 2007 meeting of ITU's Council. He said that not only had the experiment been a success in raising awareness of ITU-T, it would also attract new members. Most importantly, he noted, it had helped efforts to bridge the "standardization gap" between countries with resources to pursue standardization issues and those without. "There has been very positive feedback from developing countries," said Johnson. "Last year exactly 500 ITU-T Recommendations had been sold to developing countries; this year, after allowing free access, they have downloaded some 300 000."

Hat tip to Gary Price who posted the story on his [Resource Shelf blog](http://www.resourceshelf.com/2007/09/13/itu-opens-up-huge-online-resource-some-itu-standards-now-available-at-no-charge/) (<http://www.resourceshelf.com/2007/09/13/itu-opens-up-huge-online-resource-some-itu-standards-now-available-at-no-charge/>).

IET announces launch of Inspec Direct

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) has announced that Inspec Direct, a new web-based version of the Inspec database, will be available directly from the IET in January 2008. Inspec provides an index to literature in physics, electrical and electronic engineering, computer science, information technology, manufacturing, production and mechanical engineering as well as interdisciplinary areas such as materials science, oceanography, nuclear engineering, geophysics, biomedical engineering and biophysics.

The IET press release says that the new Inspec Direct platform will feature a "user focused design" that will support all levels of scientific and technical research in the corporate, industrial, government and academic sectors. The Inspec Direct platform will be commercially available on January 1, 2008, but researchers and information professionals are invited to trial the new platform for free. For a free trial or further information about Inspec Direct, go to <http://www.theiet.org/inspecdirect/>

Tighter controls on Wikipedia edits

I spotted this piece of news in [Information World Review](http://www.iwr.co.uk/2199277) (<http://www.iwr.co.uk/2199277>). It seems that the German language version of Wikipedia will restrict instant editing of articles and that 'trusted editors' will have to pass the content before it appears online. The changes will come into effect later this year, and it has been suggested that this approach could be applied to the English language version of Wikipedia. There have been questions about the accuracy and bias of some of the articles, but I have always found that the articles in the scientific areas I research have been excellent. I have noticed, though, that some biographies have obviously been 'edited' either by the person themselves or by their PA to present the 'official' picture that they wish to portray. Wikipedia already requires users to sign in before they can edit certain pages, for example those on Tony Blair and George Bush, so this is taking the process of control a stage further. My main concerns about this approach are that it will delay updates and corrections, and who will decide who is to be a 'trusted editor'?

Earthquake alerts

Those of us with friends and relatives in Australia, New Zealand and in other countries on the Pacific rim are well aware that earthquakes regularly hit the region. Many of them are minor but recently there have been more serious events, most of which are not picked up by the UK or European press. A Google News alert will pick up those that make the headlines in the regional press that are local to the quake, but aftershocks are not always reported. Search engine Ask has a map showing recent earthquakes and their magnitude on a map at

<http://www.ask.com/earthquake> but there is no email or RSS alert option so you have to keep going back to the site to see the latest news. The US Geological Survey has detailed information and alerts on earthquakes at <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/>. In addition there are two RSS feeds: one is for earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 2.5 (<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/catalogs/eqs1day-M2.5.xml>) and the second for those with a magnitude greater than 5.0 (<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/catalogs/eqs7day-M5.xml>).

If you are a Firefox user there is an eQuake add-on at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/2239> which uses the USGS data. It alerts you with the basic information (date, location, and magnitude) of each earthquake but you can specify a lower limit for the magnitude, for example 4. By default your browser will 'shake' proportional to the earthquake magnitude but you can configure the alert methods. I have only just installed it so I'm not sure how disruptive the quaking browser effect is going to be and as I write this an earthquake of 4.9 has just hit the Santa Cruz Islands region! And having just spell checked this article a 6.8 quake has occurred off the west coast of the South Island of New Zealand. If nothing else this is an interesting way to demonstrate the frequency of earthquakes.

Searching Questions

Customising news RSS alerts

Question:

I monitor UK newspapers for information on companies and various business events and would rather use RSS than email alerts for this. I have a list of 'preferred' newspapers and although they all have RSS feeds, it seems to be all or nothing. Is there a way of customising the feeds?

Answer:

Go to Google News (<http://news.google.co.uk/>) and click on the Advanced News Search option. Type your search terms into the boxes at the top of the form and then specify the source, for example Telegraph.co.uk, in the News Source box. Unfortunately you can only enter one source at a time using this screen. If you want to search on several news sources at the same time, use the source: command and combine them using OR in the standard search box. For example:

```
"Black Monday" source:telegraph_co_uk OR source:Independent OR  
source:Times_Online
```

Meetings and Workshops

Workshop: Business Information: Key Web Resources

Organiser: TFPL

Venue: TFPL, 2nd Floor, 160 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BF

Date: Wednesday, 31st October 2007

Presenter: Karen Blakeman.

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.

Contact Information

Karen Blakeman, RBA Information Services
UK Tel: 0118 947 2256
Int. Tel: +44 118 947 2256

UK Fax: 020 8020 0253
Int. Fax: +44 20 8020 0253

Address: 88 Star Road, Caversham, Berks RG4 5BE, UK

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