Tales from the Terminal Room
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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

Workshop on Advanced Internet Search Strategies, London

Several people have asked me when I am next running my workshop on advanced search strategies (sometimes known as Google and Beyond) in London. The next date for London is Wednesday, 18th February and there are still some places left. The venue is InTuition House, 210 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX, which is close to Borough tube station and London Bridge. The cost is £150 + VAT (total: £172.50) and includes refreshments and a buffet lunch.
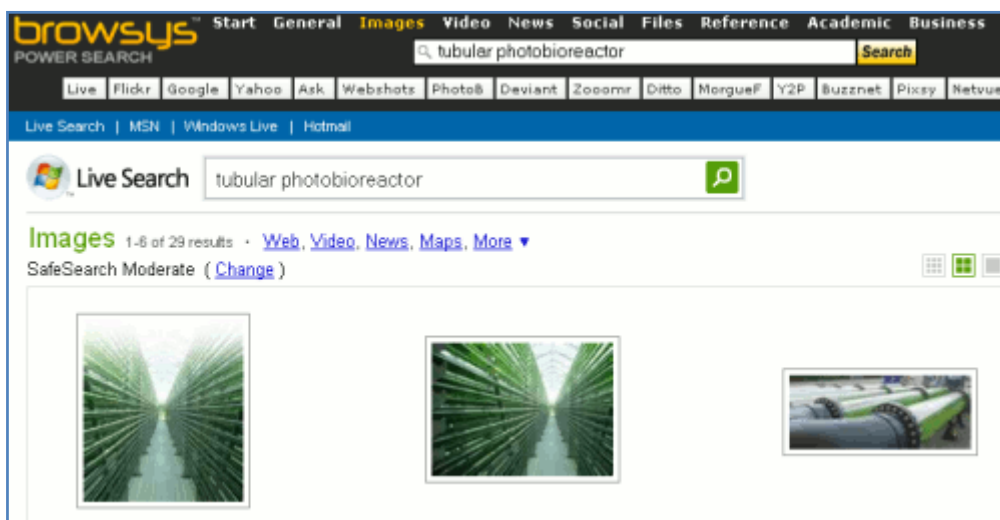
Full details of the workshop together with a booking from are on my web site at http://www.rba.co.uk/training/searching.htm. You can pay by credit card, PayPal or request to be invoiced for the event.

For those of you who live in the Manchester area, I am running a similar event for UKeiG on April 1st. Details are at http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2009/April/GoogleandBeyondManchester200904.html

Intelways becomes Browsys Powersearch

Intelways is a an interface to dozens of search engines enabling you to type in your search strategy once and click your way through the list of tools one by one. The search tools are grouped according to media and resource type for example news, images, video, reference. It is an excellent way of quickly running your search through a whole range of tools and also a reminder of Google alternatives. It is a great favourite of mine and this morning I was horrified to find that Intelways.com is now a holding page on GoDaddy.com. It appears that the domain name ownership expired on January 3rd and has not been renewed by Intelways. I tried the older name for the search tool, crossengine.com, and was relieved that it redirected me to Browsys Powersearch (http://www.browsys.com/powersearch/).

This is owned by Intelways, looks exactly the same as Intelways - apart from the Browsys logo - and does exactly the same thing. So sighs of relief here at RBA. I wonder if Intelways deliberately allowed their domain name to lapse, having decided to change the branding of their site, or if they just forgot. If it was the former then it was not a sensible decision as most people will assume that Intelways is no more. Keeping the domain name and redirecting to Browsys, as does the old Crossengine.com URL, would have been much better. But perhaps more people were using the Crossengine URL than Intelways.

viaLibri - search for rare books

viaLibri (http://www.vialibri.net/) searches for old and rare books on eighteen different web sites that aggregate the inventory of hundreds of antiquarian booksellers world-wide. You can search by a number of criteria including author, title, imprint, publication years (before/after), price, first edition and keyword. As the interfaces and search options of the individual sites are different you may get no results at all if your search is too narrow, so it pays to start off with a relatively broad search. You can always edit your search later and add extra criteria.

You can sort the results by year of publication, price, author, title or bookseller and then click on the individual links to view further details of the book or buy it from the bookseller.

There is also a Quick Query Library Search that searches 72 online library catalogues including Worldcat, Copac, National Union Catalogues and National Libraries. You can use viaLibri's Quick Query, which only searches on author, title or keywords, but enables you to click and run your search in each catalogue in turn without re-typing your search. Alternatively you can click through to each of the catalogues advanced search screens, but you will have to re-enter your search terms.

A very nice site if you are trying to locate a rare book for purchase or if you just want to find a copy in a local library for research purposes.

Track down lost bank accounts

If you have lost track of a bank or building society account Lost Accounts (http://www.mylostaccount.org.uk/) can help you find it. This is a free service set up by the British Bankers' Association, the Building Societies Association and National Savings and Investments. Together they represent most of the firms that offer savings and current accounts in the UK.

Banks and building societies are stepping up their campaigns to reunite customers with lost cash because towards the end of 2009 the Government is going to pool the £1 billion lying in dormant accounts and place the money in an FSA-regulated central reclaim fund. This fund will then be reinvested in the community, particularly in youth services and financial inclusion schemes, but if someone later comes forward to claim their money, the fund will be used to pay account holders. The procedure for tracking down your dormant or forgotten account is very straight forward. You enter your personal details, current and previous addresses and as much information as possible about the account. Even if the original institution has been swallowed up in mergers and

acquisitions, it should still be possible to find your account. The response may take up to 12 weeks but, before you can claim the money as yours, you will have to provide proof of identity.
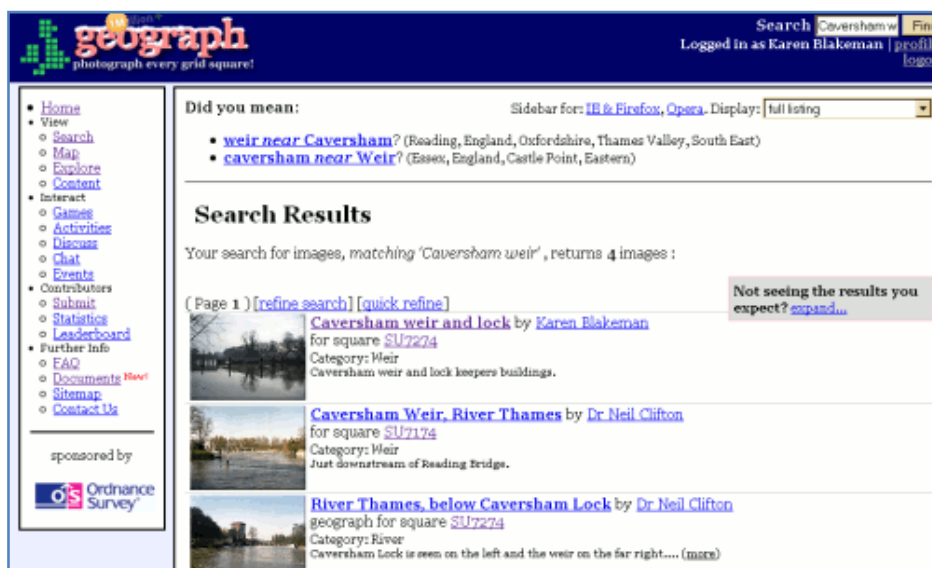

Geograph British Isles - photograph every grid square

Geograph British Isles (http://www.geograph.org.uk/), sponsored by the Ordnance Survey, aims to collect geographically representative photographs and information for every square kilometre of Great Britain and Ireland.

According to a recent article in the Daily Telegraph (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/technology/technologynews/3966478/Modern-Domesday-book-builds-photo-archive-of-UK.html) the three founders of the project - Paul Dixon, Gary Rogers and Barry Hunter - think of it as a "modern Domesday Book". It was started in February 2005 and has apparently built up a large following in Canada, New Zealand and Australia among people searching for pictures of their ancestors' home towns.

You can find photos by browsing the map or by searching on keywords. The Advanced Search has options for grid reference, post code, place name and centre of county. You can specify the distance in kilometres (up to 10) from any of the above. The only option that did not work for me was post code. Other advanced search criteria include contributor, a drop down list for category e.g. weir, date submitted and date taken. All submitters are required to assign a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike licence to their photographs and to allow the right to use the work commercially, so this site is ideal if you are looking for photos that you can use in a presentation.

Geograph search results for Caversham weir:

If you wish to submit a photo you first have to register. Once you have logged in, you have to give the grid reference for your photograph. Somehow I missed the easy route the first time I tried this and spent ages trying to work out the exact OS reference. The easier and better way to do this is to use the Map Placename Application. This uses Google Maps and you simply home in on your location. The grid reference is automatically generated and you move on to step 2, which is where you specify the image file you wish to upload. On the same screen you need to supply the grid reference of the "primary photo subject", but if you have used the map to find the location this should be filled in automatically. For the photographer position you just drag and drop the relevant circle onto the map.

The next step is to add a title, description, primary geographical category e.g. floods, AA phone box, bus stop. The date taken is automatically extracted from the EXIF (Exchangeable image file format) information but this can be changed manually - useful if you never got around to setting up the correct date and time on your camera! Finally, you have to confirm that you agree to the Creative Commons rights assigned to your photo.

There is a lot on this site and it may not always be obvious to users how to search, and for those who wish to submit photos it does require time and effort to upload images. From the searchers' point of view it is worth it: the highly structured records ensure that precision and relevance is high. Family snaps are rejected! The FAQ clearly states that while people can be in the photo, they must not *be* the photo. If you are looking for photographs of locations in Great Britain and Ireland this is an excellent place to start, but be warned - it is addictive.

Information Resources
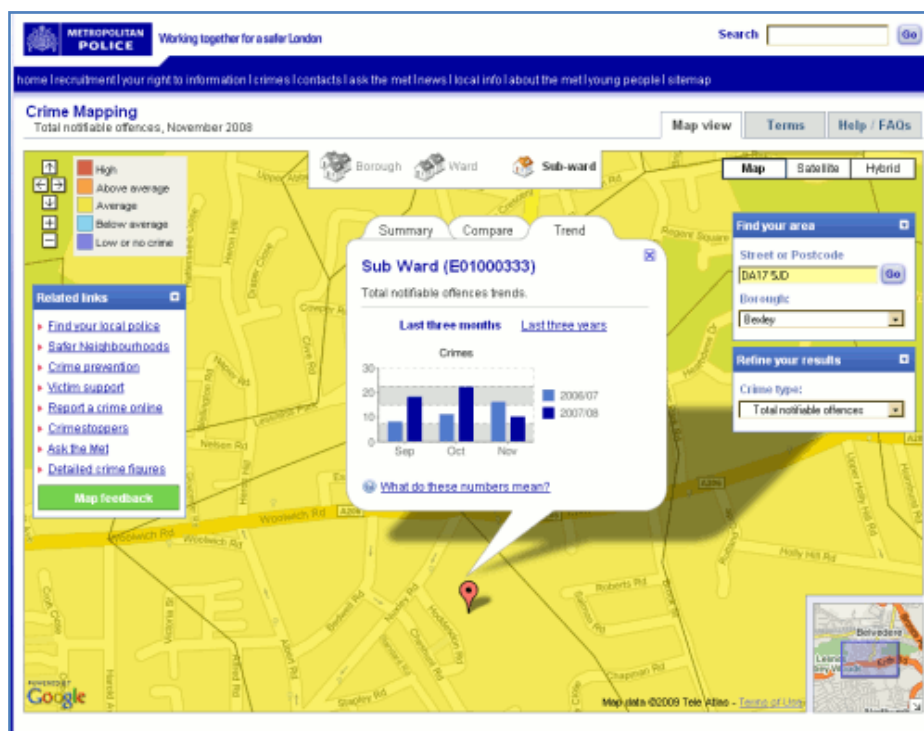
Search and the UK's regional press

If you are a serious news junkie like myself, you may find Martin Belam's recent series of articles on the UK's regional press (http://www.currybet.net/cbet_blog/regional_press/) of interest. The articles cover topics such as the provision of RSS (not all newspapers offer them!), links to social bookmarking sites, and the site search options offered by the newspapers. This is all very useful information for anyone who needs to assess the quality and functionality of local press sites in terms of current content, archives and alerting services.

Online maps for local crime statistics

Police forces in England and Wales are now providing access to local crime statistics via online maps. These allow the public to drill down to ward level and view crime trends in their area. The statistics include information about burglary, robbery, theft, vehicle crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

The maps should be available via the local police web sites, although you may have to hunt around for the links. Once you have found the maps, you can either browse them or enter your post code to find information on just your area. The interfaces and presentation of the data can vary considerably between police forces as does the break-down of the crime statistics. Thames Valley provides a basic map and tables of data, while others such as the Metropolitan police offer graphs as well as the figures. All of the online maps colour code areas according to the levels of crime: high, above average, average, below average, low or no crime.

Metropolitan Police crime statistics for postcode DA17 5JD

EBRD 2009 Directory of Business Information Sources

11th Edition - New for 2009

January discounts available

Title: EBRD Directory of Business Information Sources on central and eastern Europe and the CIS
Editor: Liz Coles
ISBN: 1874128 31 6
Price: £25.00 January Discount - Pay Only £150.00, EUR 170, $US235 (+ delivery)

Economic, business and political policies adopted in the countries of central and Eastern Europe and the CIS following the global economic storm will play a crucial role in European economic recovery. In the course of its work, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development identifies and evaluates a large volume of business information relevant to the region to monitor the potential and the risks associated with the transition economies of Europe. The EBRD Directory provides access to this wealth of business intelligence both in printed form and on the Internet via a searchable database.

Key Features

- Gain immediate Internet access to the location of over 3,000 key sources of business information gathered from the world's leading publishers, banks, commercial and investment agencies.

- Identify the information sources used daily by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Business Information Centre.

- Descriptive summaries, comprehensive indexing and Internet search options aid the selection of sources, with active links to email and web addresses.

Visit http://www.dataresources.co.uk for full details, sample pages and secure online ordering.

Gizmo of the Month

Undeleting Firefox Tabs

This is one for Firefox users. Both Firefox and IE7 support multiple tabs. This is great when you want to flit from one web page to another but you can end up with dozens of them in a session. If you delete or close a tab by mistake, you can undelete it in Firefox by pressing Ctrl Shift T. This will also work if you have closed Firefox using 'Save and Quit'. It does not work in IE7 - does anyone know if it is even possible to rescue a closed tab in IE7?

Meetings and Seminars

Seminar: Mashups – tasty recipes for 2009
Date: Tuesday**,** 3rd February 2009. Evening event. See website for further details and time.
Venue: Great Expectations, 33 London Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4PS
Organiser: BBOD. Contact Norman Briggs nwbriggs@pcintell.co.uk
Presenter: Karen Blakeman
Outline: Mashups are not just for the remnants of your Christmas or Sunday dinner! A mashup is also a web application that combines data from more than one source into a single integrated tool, and you may be surprised at how commonplace they have become. Blogs, Yahoo Finance, Facebook, Geograph, and the latest UK police forces' crime statistics all use mashups. Karen Blakeman will look at examples from a variety of sectors and subject areas and show how easy it is to create your own. The issues of quality and ownership of data will also be addressed.
Cost: Free of charge
URL: http://www.cilip.org.uk/branches/byregion/southeast/sub/bbod/events

Workshop: Advanced Internet Search Strategies
Date: Wednesday, 18th February, 9.45 – 16.30 pm
Venue: InTuition House, 210 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX
Organiser: RBA Information Services
Presenter: Karen Blakeman
Outline: The aim of this workshop is to provide users of the Internet with the tools and information that are needed to search more quickly and effectively. This workshop looks at recent developments at Google and the alternatives, especially the new kids on the block and Web 2.0 'stuff'. Karen Blakeman will take you through the best of the search engine world and highlight how they can be used to significantly improve your results. By the end of the day, participants will have a vital toolkit to help them search more effectively, including key search tools, comparisons, top tips and essential search techniques.
Cost: £150 + VAT (Total: £172.50) Includes refreshments and a buffet lunch.
URL: http://www.rba.co.uk/training/searching.htm

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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