Internet Resources for Libraries

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Abstract: - Anyone who has spent even 10 minutes surfing and searching the Internet discovers an important truth: There are almost as many Web sites out there in cyberspace waiting to be discovered as there are stars visible in the heavens on a clear night. Therefore, it is not a matter of quality that is involved in finding places where information is stored—it is a matter of sorting the wheat from the chaff. To borrow a metaphor from the physical world around us, you can literally throw a rock in any direction at all and hit something if you are not especially choosy about what you hit. However, sorting through this abundance of information riches and hooking up to the “good stuff”, those sites that are at once useful, accessible, accurate, and up-to-date, takes a good deal of careful research. This paper, proposes to discuss the ways in which valuable and useful Web sites can be located, the best Web has to offer (the “cream of the crop”), how different search engines and Web sites are organised, and how they can best be exploited to yield valuable information.

Keywords: Internet, Reference Sources

The Internet as a Reference Tool.
Reference work is still very much the same as it always was: people have information needs, they pose a question to the library, the librarian seeks information on the subject and presents it as an answer. However, the Internet has transformed the way reference work is being done and made it possible for every individual to become an independent reference librarian/researcher. So, what is the impact of the Internet on a book-based reference service?
As an example of book-form materials that are still unparalleled in their ability to provide information, consider multivolume encyclopedias, and in particular, specialised encyclopedias. Table 1 presents some comparative aspects of Internet encyclopedias and adult, standard, print encyclopedias. The comparisons assume that the
user is untutored, and unfamiliar with the use of such reference tools.

Table 1: Comparative Advantages of Internet and Print Reference Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Internet Encyclopedia</th>
<th>Print Encyclopedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storage-dependent</td>
<td>No storage space requirement</td>
<td>Requires shelf space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget-dependent</td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>No additional cost</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross- indexing</td>
<td>Links from subject to subject</td>
<td>Some indexing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>No physical damage</td>
<td>Subject to wear, fire, bugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction in source</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Usually considerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required</td>
<td>May be substantial</td>
<td>Needs no instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous users</td>
<td>Multiple users simultaneously</td>
<td>not possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>May be substantial</td>
<td>Normally, zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediary required</td>
<td>Normally</td>
<td>No need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of information</td>
<td>May overwhelm</td>
<td>Usually appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact- finding</td>
<td>Finding specific facts difficult</td>
<td>Frequently better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness of search</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-text availability</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer paper, ink costs</td>
<td>May be substantial</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censorship</td>
<td>Filtering often imposed</td>
<td>Only in selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security precautions</td>
<td>For hardware, software</td>
<td>For books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection charges</td>
<td>May be substantial</td>
<td>Non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Search engines:

Many search engines now feature buttons that accompany a search, but the thinking behind what these buttons will lead you to is based on previous human behaviour as exhibited by Web-traffic flow patterns and link popularity. The theory behind this is that because people tend to return to the most useful sites, so will you.

Table 2 lists selected Web sites categorised by type.

Table 2: Recommended Internet Search Engines, Directories and Web Sites, by Category (number of entries per category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) General/ meta – search engines</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) reference sites</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) news and information sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D) business/ financial sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E) sports sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) travel sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(G) food/ cooking sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H) health sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) technology sites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(J) childrens /parenting sites</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A: 1, About.com (www.about.com)
A: 2, Alexa (www.alexa.com)
A: 3 All-in-one (www.albany.net/allinone)
A: 4 All the web (www.alltheweb)
A: 5 altavista (www.av.com)
A: 6 America online (www.aol.com)
A: 7 Ask jeeves (www.askjeees.com/also: ask.com)
**A**
8 Beaucoup ([www.beaucoup.com](http://www.beaucoup.com))
A: 9 C4 ([www.c4.com](http://www.c4.com))
A: 10 Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com))

**B**
B1. ([www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com))
B2. ([www.bigbook.com](http://www.bigbook.com))
B3. ([www.booksinprint.com](http://www.booksinprint.com))
B5. ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com))
B6. ([www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)) almanac is online.
B9. ([www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)). Roget's Thesaurus, an online way to find synonyms.
B10. ([www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com)) OneLook dictionaries

**C**
C1. ABCN News .com ([www.abcn.com](http://www.abcn.com)) The powerful major news network.
C2. ABP News. com ([www.abp.com](http://www.abp.com)) This web site is connected with crime, justice and safety.
C3. CNN Interactive ([www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)) For quick updates of breaking and developing news.
C4. MSNBC ([www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)) This site makes good use of the news resources of a major television and radio news network.
D—Financial News and Information Sources:
D1. CBS Market watch ([cbs.marketwatch.com](http://cbs.marketwatch.com))
D2. MSN Money Central ([www.moneycentral.com](http://www.moneycentral.com)) for banking, retirement and wills, real estate, taxes, family finance, etc.
D3. Yahoo! Finance (quote. Yahoo!.com)
E: Sports Sites
E1. Cbs Sportline ([www.sportsline.com](http://www.sportsline.com))
E3. ESPN ([www.com](http://www.com)) scores play by play, statistics, standing news.
E5. NBA.com([www.nba.com](http://www.nba.com)) information about basketball.
F—Travel sites
F1. Arthur Frommers Budget Travel Online ([www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com))
F4. Travelocity ([www.cyberdiet](http://www.cyberdiet)) Good for finding airlines schedules.
G. Food / nutrition Sites
G3. Food and Wine Online ([www.pathfinder.com](http://www.pathfinder.com)/foodWine) detailed recipes, and a searchable wine guide.
Gs. The Kitchen Link ([www.kitchen link.com](http://www.kitchen link.com)) Food related link.
H—Health / Medical Sites
H1. Ask Dr. Weil ([www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com)) Advice on vitamins and natural remedies from the leading alternative medicine proponent Dr. Andrew Weil.
H2. Centres for Disease Control and prevention ([www.cdc.com](http://www.cdc.com)) Site on disease outbreaks, and useful tips.
H3. Health finder ([www.healthfinder .com](http://www.healthfinder.com)) site for medical journals, news, libraries, agencies etc.
H4. Mayo Clinic Health Oasis([www.mayohospital.com](http://www.mayohospital.com)) site deals with diseases such as cancer, nutrition, allergies etc.
I: Technology sites:
I1. CNET ([www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com)) A good site for finding tech news.
I2. The Industry Standard .com
I4. Service911.com ([www.service911.com](http://www.service911.com)) All Types of computer support in a single click.
I5. Tech Web ([www.techweb.com](http://www.techweb.com)) Information Technology professions will find a wealth of product review.
J: Children’s / parents Sites.
J1. Ask Jives for Kids ([www.askjeevesforkids.com](http://www.askjeevesforkids.com)) This sites lets
kids (and Their Parents) type in a questions in plain English and then present response.

J 2 BabyCenter.com(www.babycenter.com) This site provides new parents and to-be parents caring for and raising babies.

J 3 Family Education Network(www.familyeducation.com) this site for all about family related.

J 4 Parent’s place(www.parentsplace.com) site for baby care and raising of healthy children.

J 5 Yucky.com (www.yucky.com) Fun for kids.

Amazon.com Books (www.amazon.com) pioneered Internet book buying and revolutionized the publishing industry. Barnesandnoble.com (www.barnesandnoble.com), a relative newcomer to online book buying, features the stock of the ubiquitous bookstores, plus recordings, video, and so forth. Books on-line (www.cs.cmu.edu/) is a division of buy.com, and books are only one area in which one can order merchandise. Borders.com (www.borders.com) is a deep discounter of standard publishers list prices.

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