Webb's web

A matter of identity

There's a fine old saying that on the internet nobody knows you're a dog; in fact you could say that on the internet you might be anyone you want. And many people have good reasons for wanting to hide their true identities on the web: which is OK, as long as you keep track of these multiple personalities and remember who you really are. I was musing on this when I received an invitation on LinkedIn (**http://www.linkedin.com**) from a stranger. Now, conscious that spammers are everywhere, I replied politely that I was not inclined to accept the request without knowing whether I really was acquainted with the person. She replied promptly that the LinkedIn request came from her real name (that service tends to be a little more serious than many other social networking sites) whereas I'd only known her on another list through her *nom de keyboard*. This was the third time that this has happened, which leads me to suggest that if you're going to go by another moniker, don't expect everyone to know your real name – otherwise what's the point?

A warning on copyright

A new service called Wolfram Alpha caught a lot of attention a couple of months ago. While they never claimed it was a Google Killer, it was widely touted as a Big New Thing. Now comes a caution that you'd better be careful how you use it. Michael Trick, an expert in the world of Operations Research has pointed out in his Blog at **http://mat.tepper.cmu.edu/blog/?p=786** that their terms of service require a lot of attribution if you use any of the results of a search anywhere, any time.

Beyond web 2.0

For a look at the future (it's really the present, though) take a peek at Tim O'Reilly and John Battelle's White Paper at **http://www.web2summit.com/web2009/public/schedule/detail/10194,** and then remember that it's five years since the original Web 2.0 Conference. They've done an impressive job in gathering together a range of developments and synthesising a few observations that describe current and future trends. (And if you think the title "Web Squared" sounds familiar, you may recall it from an ABC Radio National Future Tense program in August).

Wikipedia and Copyright

It all started in July when Britain's National Portrait Gallery (**http://www.npg.org.uk**) wrote a stroppy letter to the Wikipedia Foundation (**http://blog.wikimedia.org/**) protesting about an incident where a smart young thing had hijacked a lot of high-quality images from the NPG site and 'published' them on Wikipedia. He did this despite several notices on the NPG site giving firm directions about what to do if you wanted to copy or use any of the content on their site. The high-quality images, of course, were products prepared at considerable expense by the NPG with the expectation of selling them for republication. This seems not to have mattered to the person involved or to the people at Wikimedia, who chose to hide behind the defence that it would not be a copyright infringement in the US to do this. I make no apologies for taking the side of a cultural institution in protecting its property against the depredations of an arrogant mob who assert that if it's on the web, it's free – no matter that they had to do some serious hacking to extract the images from the NPG's server.

It became a bit more interesting when I published a note about this on my ALIA Blog (**http://www.alia.org.au/members-only/webbsblog/**) and I got a couple of responses from Wikipedia supporters, who were unmoved by my suggestion that it was plain bad manners to appropriate content in this way. The NPG does in fact provide images on their site at medium resolution, but if people are going to act in such an uncouth way as to grab what they can, I fear that institutions are going to seriously limit what they provide online – at any resolution.

If you're interested in following up the discussions on the legal issues, there are a couple of good posts at TechnoLlama (**http://tinyurl.com/msg797**) and LawClanger (**http://tinyurl.com/nxo9d**).

Victorian Government Gazettes

The State Library of Victoria deserves a big pat on the back for its initiative at **http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au.** They say that it provides access to over 160 years of official information published in and about Victoria, with images of every relevant page in the Victoria Government Gazette produced since 1836, as well as searchable indexes for each publication. You'll find the occasional reference to one Edward Kelly (but not as many as you would expect) and many more to his latter-day emulators. The ardent researchers will love it.

Aspects of online media

Now it seems that Fairfax is planning to find some way of charging for its online media resources, joining the Murdoch empire in searching for the way to make up for the rivers of gold that have changed their flow. If they do, it will prove one thing: just how much people are prepared to pay for 'quality journalism'. The ABC (I hope) will continue to provide news and opinion for free, so we'll all have to decide whether we want just news or considered reporting on our screens - and pay accordingly. In the meantime, there's a lot of good quality coverage that you can find free – now and most likely in the future. One I came across was The Monthly's SlowTV channel, and a prime example of what they provide is a panel discussion on journalism (**http://tinyurl.com/lv2x4h**).

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Don't forget to visit my blog
http://www.alia.org.au/webbsblog

Empowering users – what we can do to facilitate creation, discovery, use, and transformation of our collections

This year's current awareness seminar organised by the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University in conjunction with the National Library of Australia will be held in Hobart for the first time. Supported by ALIA, the one day seminar will run on Thursday November 5th prior to the Libraries Australia Forum being held on the following day.

The theme of the day is based upon the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) strategic plan *Re-imagining Library Services* **http://www.nsla.org.au/projects/rls/** which outlines the strategies they consider essential in order for libraries to remain at the heart of their communities while making the fundamental shifts necessary to meet the needs of users who, more than ever, are contributors as well as consumers of the digital world.

The seminar will be opened by the Director-General of the National Library and feature key members from across the profession (representing national, state, university and public libraries), providing a stimulating and thought-provoking day on the future for our libraries. In addition, keynote speaker Paul Reynolds, Adjunct Director (Digital Library) to the National Library of New Zealand, and part of the New Zealand government's *Digital Advisory Group*, will close the Seminar.

The full program and registration ((\$70 ALIA members, \$100 non-members) is available at: **http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/sis/empoweringusers.html**

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