Beyond the Library

The World-Wide Web is a very useful tool for research - if you know where the treasures are. A good starting point is the Beyond the Library section of the Library's web server (http://library.ust.hk/res/beyond/). Each of the resources here have been carefully selected and reviewed based on established guidelines by a group of experienced librarians. Their expertise ensures that the resources selected are of high quality and are relevant to the needs of our users.

For example, PubMed (Science -> Biology & Biochemistry) is a search service with 9 million citations and abstracts in Medline and other databases. IBM Intellectual Property Network (Science -> General) provides bibliographic information and full-images to U.S., European, and World Intellectual Property Office patents and applications. National Technical Information Service (NTIS) (Engineering -> General) is a database with references to 370,000 technical and research publications on scientific, engineering, and business-related disciplines. Uncover Web (Table of Contents Databases) offers online tables of contents from over 17,000 journals in all disciplines. These databases are freely available on the Web, and yet their quality and coverage are comparable to their expensive commercial counterparts.

TradePort: Market Research (Business & Management -> Marketing) has business information and market research reports. If you are looking for Hong Kong ordinances or China laws and regulations in English, try 香港法律 = Laws of Hong Kong and Chinalaw Web (Humanities & Social Sciences -> Law / Legal

Databases - the Moving Target

The advent of the Internet in recent years has dramatically changed the landscape of information access. While it used to be considered a major technological breakthrough to provide access to electronic resources either on standalone workstation or through the campus network, the big shift in the past year was toward broad-base web access. This change allows for updating data on a daily/weekly basis, provides a more standardized user interface, and is platform-(and potentially location-) independent.

To ensure that our users benefit from the latest developments, the Library has been constantly investigating new technologies for the provision of electronic resource access. Let's look at three examples:

Proquest Direct

When the Library opened in 1991, the use of CD-ROM technology to store and disseminate full-text information was at an early stage. The only means to provide users access to fulltext electronic journals – GPO, BPO and SSO – was via standalone work-

INTERNET: Using Directories

The World-Wide Web is growing at such an exponential rate that it is often difficult to find things. Using search engines like AltaVista or Lycos is an effective way to dig out useful resources, but to obtain optimal results you
usually have to enter complex search criteria which involves learning the rules specific to the search engine. An easier alternative is to use directories, either printed or web-based.

Web directories normally group sites by broad subjects and further subdivide them into narrower categories. You simply 'click' your way from the top level down to the specific site that interests you. Several directories are available on our Beyond the Library page at http://library.ust.hk/res/beyond.html under “Finding things on the Internet.” Try out Yahoo. To locate Byte magazine, for instance, you would select Computers and Internet -> Magazines -> Byte. There you will find an online archive of the magazine from 1994. Another value-added feature of Yahoo is that you can perform keyword searches on all the Yahoo sites or just the sites of the subcategories, thus saving the time of wading through the various subdirectories.

For more scholarly Internet resources, visit Infomine or the WWW Virtual Library. The Britannica Internet Guide not only classifies, but also rates and reviews thousands of quality web sites. Ratings are from * (noteworthy) to ***** (best of the web).

Web directories used to be predominately in English. The scene is changing with the appearance of Chinese web directories like 雅虎中文 Yahoo and 搜狐SOHOO.

You can also consult printed Web directories in our collection. The most current ones are New Riders’ Official World Wide Web Yellow Pages (Reference TK5105.888 N485 1997), Harley Hahn’s Internet and Web Yellow Pages 1998 (Reference TK5105.875 157 H34 1998) and the Gale Guide to Internet Databases (Reference TK5105.875 157 G85 1998). All three organize thousands of selected sites in a subject hierarchy, with master indexes at the back. Descriptive information on the sites are given to help you assess their relevancy.

If you want to know more about surfing the Web using directories and search engines, do watch for our Introductory and Intermediate WWW workshops scheduled for late January/February.
"Where can I find information on the Chek Lap Kok airport project?" "I need the recent average salaries of different professional positions in HK?" "What is the scientific name of watermelon?"

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Studies). InfoNation (Reference -> Statistics & Yearbooks) lets you compare economic and social statistics for up to seven countries at one time.

The Web also has digital libraries for classic works. The Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts (Humanities & Social Sciences -> Literature) includes works of 130 authors from American and English literature, and Western philosophy; and 亦凡書庫 provides an amazing range of full-text Chinese works, including novels, philosophical writings, biographies, poetry, prose, essays. College & Universities Home Pages (Reference -> Directories) is a wonderful resource for finding Web sites of higher institutions around the world.

Some of the selected resources have been added to the Library Online Catalog to make them easier for you to find. There are now about 700 resources under Beyond the Library, including pointers to some of the best search engines on the Web, which we introduced in previous issues. We invite you to visit this section of the Library Web and send us feedback or your suggested sites for inclusion.

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stations in the Library’s Database Search Room. To avoid having a large number of users queuing up for the databases and to enable users to access the citation portions campus-wide, the Library also loaded the index on its online catalogue. In 1996, the Library successfully installed a CD-ROM jukebox system and became the first Library in Asia offering campus-wide access to the full-image PowerPages databases. Late last year, PowerPages (GPO, BPO, SSO, ASTP) became available on the Web as a product called Proquest Direct. Considering the cost savings and added value offered by this enhanced product, the Library decided to replace the Catalog index with these full-text databases.

As you can see, trying to take advantage of what new technologies have to offer is similar to following a moving target. While we have always aimed to make the transitions as transparent as possible, sometimes confusion is unavoidable. Library instruction classes are offered regularly to ensure that our users will be able to optimize the new features offered by the enhanced products.

Academic Universe (AU)

Another 'standalone-to-Web' migration just completed was the shift from Academic Access of Lexis/Nexis to Academic Universe. With an enhanced interface, AU has a faster response time, is available campus-wide, and is more than 60% cheaper. AU offers the same content, except for some law materials.

中國資訊庫 (China InfoBank)

從去年十二月開始,中國資訊庫 (China Infobank)已從獨立之單橈系統工作站,轉移到校園內聯機網絡上(Intranet),使用者現可在校園任何角落,在網絡上尋取中國資訊庫之資料.中國資訊庫現提供三項主要的有線検索服務:商業資訊庫,包括及時的實用的商業資料,從千多份中國報章雜誌中搜聚而成.實時新聞,包括大部份中國官方新聞機構所發佈之英語的中國實時新聞及每日約50條最新國際重要政經新聞,中國證券庫,包括最新的上海,深圳及香港各證券市場之最新消息.

To speed up connections to Proquest Direct, Academic Universe, and China InfoBank, users are reminded to configure their web browser to use the University's proxy server. Refer to the Systems Update article on page 4 for details.
Hong Kong Newspaper Clipping Index (HKNCI)

While most databases are gradually being enhanced as new versions are unveiled in the market place, the HKNCI has unfortunately moved in the other direction. Due to major software changes, it is no longer compatible with the campus network. Please be aware that the indexes for HKNCI from April, 1998 onward can be accessed only on the standalone CD-ROM workstation next to the Reference Counter. Indexes from 1980 to March 1998 are still accessible on the CD-Net.

WEB: Online Forms

In the past, you had to pick up various forms you needed during Library hours, or keep a supply in your office and hope the version you had was current. You can still do this, but now you have another option – online web forms!

The Library has placed many of its forms on the Library Web server, with links from various pages. You can also find online forms in several of the Library’s databases. For example, in the Ovid system you can use the ‘Order’ button at the bottom of most pages to send an ILL request directly to the Document Supply office.

A complete list of Library web forms can be found on the “Library Services and Programs” page at http://library.ust.hk/service.html#form. There are forms for Access Services (requesting photocopies, finding missing books, asking that something be placed on course reserve); Collection Development (suggesting the Library buy a book or subscribe to a journal); Document Supply (ILL requests); Reference (from submitting reference questions to signing up for classes); and University Archives (requests for information, photocopies, or files). Please take a look – this is a simple and effective way to send your requests, and it saves paper, too!

SYSTEMS UPDATE: Proxy Servers

What is a proxy server? In terms of the Web, it is primarily just a computer program on the server which (in this case) tries to keep copies of web pages request by UST computers, so that the next time someone wants the same page they can get it faster.

What good is that? The benefits are twofold. First is the faster access to pages someone else has recently downloaded. Second, this reduces the amount of computer traffic which has to go beyond the campus network. CCST estimated that about 40% of UST’s off-campus web access was being handled by the proxy servers, which allows everyone to have a much faster Internet experience. The UGC Universities have also installed a central proxy server to further reduce traffic between ALL the universities and the Internet.

Why does the Library care? When you use a proxy server, your computer is no longer handling the entire connection. And the proxy server has a different IP address from yours. And when your connection uses the central UGC proxy server, the destination site does not know you’re from UST. The Library and CCST have worked together to develop procedures which will allow your connection to outside databases and electronic journals to be routed with a UST address, so you still have access.

What if I don’t use the proxy server? If you are in the student barns, you won’t be able to access most of the Internet. Other users will still be able to access it, but your connections will be slow, especially because CCST says “We have configured our Internet link such that Web access via proxy servers are given higher preference.” Some users report severe slowdowns accessing Proquest Direct and other services with the proxy settings turned off. The Library strongly recommends that you use the proxy server.

How do I use the proxy server? Follow the instructions provided by CCST at http://www.ust.hk/ccst/internet/proxy_setting/