

## **WEBLIOGRAPHIES : Online Access on Information Sources**

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### **I. EXPLORING WEBLIOGRAPHIES**

#### *Introduction*

Libraries and information centers as the resource centers of excellence in information, should aim at assisting the nation in producing professional, skilled and trained manpower by providing timely and instant access to various formats of information in any part of the country and of the world.

The mission of libraries and information centers is primarily to support the institution's instructional, curricular, research, extension programs and the activities of particular organization where the library or information center is attached through an organized, relevant, and fast delivery of information services.

With the Internet as an instant source of information, libraries and information centers should create websites that will provide a patron-centered step-by-step guide in creating either basic or advanced online library services, and integrating all aspects of library activities in the virtual world. To brand the library's marketing and promote services online, its homepage should provide links to searching tools such as online public access catalog (OPAC) and other services like pathfinders and webliographies.

#### *Definitions*

The definition of webliography cannot be found in a standard Webster's or Oxford dictionary. The American Library Association of College and Research Libraries has been putting solid collection of Internet bibliographies called webliographies. These webliographies cover a wide range of topics giving specific subject-oriented directories.

In its broader and better-known definition, webliography denotes an enumerative list of hypertext links surrounding a common subject or theme. (Alimohammadi, D; Komijani, A. 2001). Webliography may also be defined as electronic bibliography of web sites, web pages and web documents.

A website (or Web site) refers to a collection of one or more web pages created by one person, company or organization on the Web. At its simplest, a Website can consist of just one page, but the websites of major companies normally contain dozens or even hundreds of individual Web pages, all linked together.

The pages of a website will be accessed from a common root URL (Uniform Resource Locator) called the homepage, and usually reside on the same physical server. The URLs of the pages organize them into a hierarchy, although the hyperlinks between them control how the reader perceives the overall structure and how the traffic flows between the different parts of the sites.

### ***Related studies***

S.R. Harris (1997) wrote the first theoretical text on webliographies. In his article “*Webliography: The Process of Building Internet Subject Access*” published in *The Acquisitions Librarian*, he argued that librarians must take an active role in providing subject access to information on the Internet, discussed those aspects of bibliography that are relevant to online information resources, and proposed webliography as an important responsibility for librarians.

N. R. Marino (1998) in her article “*Webliographies: Much More Than Just a Bibliography*” published in *Library Talk*, examined the use of webliographies as collections of Internet sites on a particular subject, to help students find relevant and useful sources on the World Wide Web, emphasizing the validity of information sources; developing criteria for evaluating information; setting up a webliography web page; and HTML commands.

Alimohammadi, D; Komijani, A. (2001) presented an article entitled “*Application of Webliography in the Libraries’ Reference Sections*” in *Proceedings of the Conference on the Application of the Internet in Libraries* (Tehran, May 2001). Tehran: Dabizesh: 87-93. Mentioned was made that a webliography, according to the accepted definition, is an enumerative list of hypertext links and a gateway to the scientific sources of information on the internet, whether annotated or not.

D. Alimohammadi (2004) in his article “*Designing Webliographies in an Effective and Simple Manner: A Step by Step Process*” which appeared in *Webology*, Volume 1, Number 1, August, 2004, presented the steps to be followed in developing webliographies.

D. Alimohammadi (2004) also wrote an article “*Webliography: a Brief Report of an Experience at the Allame Tabataba'ee University (A.T.U)*” published in *Informology*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2004, p. 217. He mentioned that webliography is a special type of web directories that should usually be produced by information professionals. This search tool provides end-users with filtered/high quality online information in a range of various topics based on their subject interest/specialization.

### ***Uses of Webliographies***

Webliographies are in fact digital equivalents of bibliographies (printed lists of information sources). Bibliographies are secondary sources among print media while webliographies are the same on the Internet (Alimohammadi, 2004b, c).

Creating webliographies will help researchers find useful, relevant and reliable sources of information from the Internet on a particular topic. These are selected electronic bibliographies of web sites, web pages and web documents on different topics.

## **II. STEPS IN CREATING WEBLIOGRAPHIES**

To develop a webliography, Dariush Alimohammadi (2004), wrote an article entitled "Designing Webliographies in an Effective and Simple Manner: A Step by Step Process". Some of the steps mentioned in this paper are being undertaken in processing the in- house preparation of webliographies, however, this paper presents the steps specifically being practiced at De La Salle University Library.

### ***1. Selecting the topic***

The first step is selecting the topic with its scope note and/or definition. The factors that may be considered in choosing the topics may include the needs of the users and topics based on the curricular offerings or programs of the different colleges in a particular academe or university.

Identification of the keywords or terms for a particular topic may come from the scope note and/or definition established. The compiler may consult the Library of Congress Subject Heading, subject dictionaries, encyclopedias and thesaurus for synonyms of keywords, broader, related and narrower terms.

### ***2. Searching the Internet***

#### ***Using SearchTool/ Engines***

Since vast numbers of websites are created each day, the numbers are so large that they are incomprehensible and the growth rate is so explosive. Hence, when searching in this furiously expanding universe of information on the World Wide Web, it is best to figure out where the topic is likely to be found and select the search tool most likely to provide relevant hits on the topic. In searching the web, there are thousands of search engines which may vary in speed, skill, depth of indexing, size of database, advanced search features and presentation of results. Each search engine is constructed differently and may return different results, even using the same phrase or words. For best results, never do just one search, always do the same search using several different search tools.

***Search Tools*** are the tools being used to search the Internet.

**Search engines** – types of software that create indexes of databases of Internet sites; rank the most relevant results first

**Subject Directories** - databases of titles, citations and websites or catalogues of resources organized by category, evaluated or ranked and cataloged by human beings

**Meta search tools** - hybrids of search engines and subject directories, they do not create their own databases; allow searching several sites at once.

***Some help tips in using search engines***

- Learn how a search engine works, use help screens
- Become familiar with several major search engines
- Study the simple and advanced instructions
- Always do the same search using several different search tools or engines

Laura B. Cohen, Web Support Librarian of the University at Albany, SUNY created an internet tutorial on how to use search engine or directory:

<http://www.internettutorials.net/choose.html>

In his book, Find It Online : the Complete Guide to Online Research, Alan M. Schlein, listed the following:

Best search engine tools:

- AlltheWeb – [www.alltheweb.com](http://www.alltheweb.com)
- Alta Vista – [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)
- Gigablast – [www.gigablast.com](http://www.gigablast.com)
- Google – [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- Lycos – [www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com)
- Teoma – [www.teoma.com](http://www.teoma.com)
- Wisenut – [www.wisenut.com](http://www.wisenut.com)
- Yahoo – [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

Other top search engines:

- AOL Search – <http://aolsearch.aol.com> (internal/subscriber)  
– <http://search.aol.com> (external/non-subscribers)
- MSN Search – [www.msnsearch.com](http://www.msnsearch.com) (now Window Lives Search)
- Netscape Search – <http://search.netscape.com>

The best subject directories:

- 4anything.com – [www.4anything.com](http://www.4anything.com)
- About.com – [www.about.com](http://www.about.com)
- Britannica.com – [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)
- BUBL LINK – <http://bubl.ac.uk/link/>
- Complete Planet – [www.completeplanet.com](http://www.completeplanet.com)
- INFOMINE – <http://infomine.ucr.edu>
- Internet Public Library – [www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)
- Joe Ant – [www.joeant.com](http://www.joeant.com)
- The Librarians' Index to the Internet – [www.lii.org](http://www.lii.org)
- LookSmart – [www.looksmart.com](http://www.looksmart.com)

- Open Directory Project – <http://dmoz.org>
- Resource Discovery Network – [www.rdn.ac.uk](http://www.rdn.ac.uk)
- Yahoo! Directory – <http://dir.yahoo.com>

Best meta search tools:

- Brainboost – <http://www.brainboost.com/>
- Dogpile – [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)
- Excite – <http://search.excite.com/>
- HighBeam Research – [www.highbeam.com](http://www.highbeam.com)
- HotBot – [www.hotbot.com](http://www.hotbot.com)
- Info.com – <http://info.com/>
- ixquick – <http://www.ixquick.com/>
- Kartoo – [www.kartoo.com](http://www.kartoo.com)
- Mamma – <http://www.mamma.com/>
- Metacrawler – <http://www.metacrawler.co.uk/>
- SurfWax – [www.surfWax.com](http://www.surfWax.com)
- Vivisimo – [www.vivisimo.com](http://www.vivisimo.com)
- WebCrawler – <http://www.webcrawler.com/>
- ZAPMETA – [www.zapmeta.com](http://www.zapmeta.com)

### ***Types of information need***

Type 1: Simple, non Boolean

- There is only one important concept in statement of information need.
- The concept can be expressed by a single term

Example: Robotics

Type 2: Simple Boolean (use of “and”, “not” and “or”)

- There is more than one important concept in the statement of information

need, each of which can be identified by a single search term

- Use of Boolean "and" ,“not“ and “or”

Example of Boolean connector “and” : Robotics and Mechatronics

- Narrows a search, resulting in fewer hits

Example of Boolean connector “not”: Robotics not Mechatronics

- Eliminates a concept
- Excludes relevant terms

Example of Boolean connector “or”: Robotics or Mechatronics

- Broadens a search, resulting in more hits.

Type 3: Complex Boolean or nested logic (use of parentheses)

- Uses parentheses to clarify relationships between search terms

Example: Robotics and (Robots or Mechatronics)

### ***3. Browsing and selecting the best websites***

#### *Criteria*

In selecting the best websites from the searched hits ***inclusion*** of the following criteria is considered:

#### Authority and Reputation

- Posting of author's name and those involved (i.e. publishers, institutions, general funding agencies, etc.) in the creation of the sites and level of their expertise and reputation and contact information and details.
- Author/producer has expertise on the subject as indicated on a credentials page. You may need to trace back in the URL (Internet address) to view a page in a higher directory with background information
- Sponsor/location of the site is appropriate to the material as shown in the URL
  - Examples:
    - .edu for educational or research material
    - .gov for government resources
    - .com for commercial products or commercially-sponsored sites
    - .org for organizations, both non and for-profit

#### Currency and Maintenance of Source

- Statement of date of creation, copyright date and last revisions
- Posting of planned up dates and revision
- Timely and appropriate updates
- Recently updated
- Up-to-date and relevant content

#### Accuracy

- Accurate, factual and verifiable information
- Error-free (i.e. both grammatically and typographically)
- Grounded on research and other scientific evidence
- Availability of published reference sources
- Objectivity (i.e. free from bias either individuals or organizations)
- Consistency and quality (i.e. subjected to referencing and editing)
- Source of the information should be clearly stated, whether original or borrowed from elsewhere

#### Comprehensiveness

- Depth of information: determine if content covers a specific time period or aspect of the topic, or strives to be comprehensive
- Use additional print and electronic sources to complement the information provided

### Purpose/ Scope of Coverage

- Statement of objectives, coverage and scope and limitations
- Provision of in-depth information rather than an overview of the topic
- Documentation of sources of information used
- Meaningful and usefulness of content
- Appropriateness of content to intended users
- Adherence to the stated purpose
- Comprehensiveness of subject area coverage
- Longevity of information

### Navigation and design

- Relevance, appropriateness and currency of links to remote sites
- Simplicity and user-friendly
- Orderly presented
- Free access and does not require registration and special software
- Efficiently operates links to other pages and sites

Furthermore, ***exclusion*** of the following is considered:

- Inappropriate sponsor and/or location of the site to the material as shown in the URL
- Ceased and/or un-updated and irregularly maintained sites
- Most personal homepages
- Commercial websites (i.e. those that merely sells products, service, etc.)
- Sites promoting offensive or illegal material
- Fee based
- Limitation of access (i.e. at certain regular downtime only)
- With automatic launching of multiple windows
- Password protected web sites

## **III. PRESENTING WEBLIOGRAPHIES**

### *Organization of Entries*

The selected sites for a chosen topic are initially prepared using Word file. Further editing and proofreading of entries and annotations and rechecking of websites are made before the webliographies are finalized.

Copies of webliographies can be printed on paper, placed on a home page, or entered into a computer-accessible file so that researchers can automatically link to relevant Websites.

### *Format*

- Provide a definition or a **scope note** for each topic of webliography. Establish the definition/s or scope note using specialized dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks or manuals as reference/s or authoritative pages on the net.
- Cite the **source/s** of the definition/s or scope note/s.
- Provide each website, web page or web document selected with unique **title** that tells what the site is all about. Below it, cite the **URL** (Uniform Resource Locator).
- Below its URL, cite the **retrieved date** to be enclosed by open and close brackets e.g. [Retrieved January 19, 2007].
- Provide a brief direct **annotation or summary** describing the site.
- Arrange **entries alphabetically** according to the title of the site stated. In cases where categories of sites need to be identified, list of local and foreign sites are separated.
- Provide the **name, e-mail address and contact number** of the compiler to establish communication for comments, questions and suggestions.
- Send the edited file to the **library's systems administrators** via email or in storage disc for mounting on the web

### *Hypertext links and PDFs*

Some web documents may come in full-text, which is a complete document held on a database. Graphics may or may not be included. The entries may appear through Hyper Text Markup Language (html) which is the language in which web pages are written. There are times where hyperlink entries are included. Hyperlinks are highlighted words or images within a hypertext document which, when clicked, takes you to another place within that document or to another site altogether.

Other entries make use of PDF (Portable Document Format) which is an electronic document that must be read with the Adobe Acrobat computer program. This feature ensures that a valid PDF will render exactly the same regardless of its origin or destination (but depending on font availability when fonts are not encapsulated in the file).

### *Sample Webliographies*

In school year 2005-2006, the Information-Reference Section of De La Salle University Library introduced the Webliography Service. It attempts to provide an electronic bibliography of web sites, web pages and web documents that supplements the resources available in the library on a particular topic. Topics initially prepared were Early Childhood Education, Graft and Corruption in the Philippines, Plagiarism, Women's Studies and Overseas Filipino Workers. These topics can be accessed on the library's home page under its search tool. The DLSU Library's homepage for webliography is: <http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/library/webliography/default.asp>

## IV. ISSUES AND CONCERNS

### *Mounting on the Web*

Transforming the documented file prepared in Microsoft word to HTML document is needed in publishing the webliography on the World Wide Web. In creating web pages, tools like Dreamweaver are used to publish the webliography on the net. Librarians who may not be familiar in using such tools may ask assistance from their systems librarians or systems administrators in uploading it on the server.

### *Updating*

To determine the availability of the websites, web pages and web documents included in the webliography, there should be a regular check up of these sites since access to some of the selected sites cannot be located as they may have been moved or deleted. Websites and web pages which which no longer exist or are no longer updated should be removed from the webliography. One way of determining when a web page was last updated is by looking for a date in the “Last Modified” field. Librarians may establish a regular period in updating the webliographies to assure the efficiency of service.

### *Monitoring of usage*

Online monitoring of the usage may be considered in order to measure the effectiveness of the webliography service. Assistance from the systems librarians may also be asked to be able to get data as to how many patrons have visited the site. Furthermore, a formal evaluation of the service may be conducted. Links to email addresses of the compilers or librarians involved in creating the webliography should be provided to facilitate contact with the users for comments, questions and suggestions to further improve the service.

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