

101* useful links for copy editors

Here is a selection of Web sites I think can be most useful for editors, whose interest is in checking facts fast rather than researching a subject. Take time to try out the links when you can, and save the ones you like as toolbar buttons (drag the url), shortcuts or favorites. The list comes out of preparations for my 2005-6 American Copy Editors Society presentations "**How to Surf Like a Duck While Paddling As Fast As You Can.**"

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Indispensable pages

- **Gary Pricesí Fast Facts page:** www.freepint.com/gary/handbook.htm Also: www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm ó his version of this page. Dated 2002.
- **Indispensable links** www.refdesk.com/indispen.html -- Big collection of quick-reference sites on many subjects, maintained by University of California librarians as part of their exhaustive Refdesk site.
- **Librarians Index to the Internet** lii.org/ -- UC Berkeley. Search engine makes it quick. Threatened with budget cuts.
- **Internet archive:** www.archive.org/ -- Home of the Wayback Machine
- **Al Tompkins' Collection**
www.ohioaces.org/index_files/2004_files/peterzicari/PDWPoynterPlaces.htm 2004 version of Poynter professor's links. For up-to-date version, get sent to Poynter...
- **The Virtual Chase:** <http://www.virtualchase.com> See "research guides" at right of home page.

Experts to watch

- **API's MediaCenter** www.mediacenter.org. Thoughtful material on new media.
- **Mary Ellen Bates** www.batesinfo.com/tip.html Search tips of the month are quite valuable.
- **Marylaine Block** marylaine.com/neatnew.html Research consultant. Has page of "Neat New Stuff."
- **Phil Bradley**, English consultant: www.philb.com/ Especially:
<http://www.philb.com/whichengine.htm>
- **Tara Calishain** www.researchbuzz.com
- **Bill Dedman** powerreporting.com (Another massive collection of links, mostly for reporters, at Columbia U.)
- **Gary Price** at Search Engine Watch searchenginewatch.com, Resource Shelf
www.resourceshelf.com
- **Sree Sreenivasan** at Poynter www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=32, his own page: www.sree.net

Look up names

- **Start with Pretrieve**, a multi-search site: www.pretrieve.com/
- **Melissadata's databases**: www.melissadata.com/Lookups/index.htm -- Includes people-finder, Zip codes, much more. Business works with mailing lists for marketers.
- **Virtual Chase's comprehensive guide**:
www.virtualchase.com/people/sources_public_records.html
- **Search Systems'** state-by-state guide: www.searchsystems.net/
- **Biography**: www.biography.com/search/index.jsp Leans toward those high on the pop index.
- **Birthdays**: 217.160.240.239/cgi-bin/query.pl ... Says data comes from public records. Rest of site is juvenile humor.
- **Bureaucrats** firstgov.gov/Contact/Directories.shtml Directories of state officials are readily available from state Web sites, via www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm
- **Businessmen**: www.zoominfo.com Other sites use same search engine.
- **Churches**: churchangel.com -- site has some limitations, but may help. Some states have references on churches. Try Search Systems to find them.
- **Charities**: Guidestar.com Sign up for more details. Also www.charitynavigator.org/

Dead people

- **The National Obituary Archive**: www.nationalobituaryarchive.com Commercial site.
- **Long-dead people**: ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/ searches Social Security records.
- **Dead politicians**: The political graveyard www.politicalgraveyard.com -- Privately owned

Live politicians

- **Congress**: thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas2.html
- **States**: www.ncsl.org Page leads to lists of legislative Web sites, most with directories.
- **Counties**:
www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=Find_a_County&Template=/cfiles/counties/usamap.cfm
- **Doctors**: dbapps.ama-assn.org/aps/amahg.htm -- AMA listing. If you don't know name, try specialty + location.
- **Educators** In Ohio, www.ode.state.oh.us/data/OEDdistbuild.asp Also www.greatschools.net
- **Lawyers**: www.martindale.com/xp/Martindale/home.xml
- **Property owners**: indorgs.virginia.edu/portico/personalproperty.html -- Nationwide list of links to county auditors and similar record-keepers. Not all counties have online records, though.

Prisoners

- **Federal**: www.bop.gov

- **States:** The Corrections Connection, www.corrections.com/links/viewlinks.asp?Cat=20

Sex offenders

- **Nationwide:** www.sexcriminals.com/regs/1041.html

Look up places

- **Aerial photos:** www.terrafly.com maps.google.com/ maps.ask.com local.live.com/
- **CIA Factbook:** www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html
- **National Geographic's Map Machine:** <http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/>
- **Geographic Name Information Server:**
geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnis/web_query.gnis_web_query_form -- U.S. Geological Survey's definitive database of U.S. place and feature names. Also covers Antarctica.
- **How far is it** www.indo.com/distance/ -- Indonesia-owned site tells distances as the crow flies.
- **Mapquest** www.mapquest.com -- Get directions from place to place to figure road mileage. Also Maps.Yahoo.com
- **Perry-Casteneda Map Collection** -- Large, librarian-organized, historical maps. www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html
- **Topozone:** www.topozone.com/viewmaps.asp -- Topographic maps of entire U.S., for when elevation is important.

Phone number locations

- In U.S.: www.melissadata.com/Lookups/phonelocation.asp
- Abroad: www.infobel.com/teldir/
- Time: www.worldtimeserver.com

Look up facts

- **About.com:** Extensive guides on many subjects. NY Times. about.com/
- **Business:** General facts, numbers: www.businessjournalism.org/ National Center for Business Journalism.
- **General:** Encyclopedia.com
- **Calculators**
 - **Convert units:** www.onlineconversion.com
 - **Convert money:** www.exchangerate.com/
 - **Cost of living adjustments:** <http://www.newsengin.com/neFreeTools.nsf/CPIcalc>
- **Encyclopedia:** www.encyclopedia.com/ Columbia Desk Encyclopedia, well presented. Also try

www.factbites.com/

- **Medical encyclopedia:** www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/encyclopedia.html
- **Lottery numbers:** Allototto.com -- Least annoying of the few sites I've seen. Note the 3 lís
- **Newspapers:** onlinenewspapers.com
- **Trademarks:** www.uspto.gov/main/trademarks.htm
- **Guinness Book of World Records:** www.guinnessworldrecords.com/
- **Urban legends - when a story seems too good to be true:**
 - Purportal, www.purportal.com, A meta-search.
 - Snopes: biggest site, most fun www.snopes.com
- **Look up sports facts**
(Credit: Mike Starkey, Plain Dealer Deputy Sports Editor)
 - **Collegiate Directories:** www.collegiatedirectories.com
 - **Ballparks.com:** www.ballparks.com/
 - **CBS Sports line:** cbs.sportsline.com/
 - **Sports Pages:** www.sportspages.com/ Rather complicated site has links to major papers' sports coverage, team sites, columnists by name, blogs and more.
 - **The Sports Cliché Site** sportscliche.com/
 - **ESPN** espn.go.com/

Look up grammar, style, translations

- **AP stylebook:** I'm cheating here. I don't use the online version. www.apstylebook.com/
- **Collective nouns:** www.anapsid.org/pdf/beastlywords.pdf also rinkworks.com/words/collective.shtml
- **Foreignword.com** www.foreignword.com/ Searches multiple translation engines.
- **Yiddish:** www.jdstone.org/truth/pages/terms.html
- **Latin:** www.csbsju.edu/library/internet/latin.html You'd be surprised how often you need it.
- **Grammar:** grammar.uoregon.edu/toc.html One of many. Others available via **dictionary.com** (dictionary.reference.com/). Best yet: Use a recognized print reference such as "The Careful Writer" Also: **CJR Language Corner:** www.cjr.org/tools/lc/
- **Thesaurus:** www.visualthesaurus.com/index.jsp -- lets you look up four or five words/concepts before trial service cuts you off and you have to close page and surf back to it. Well worth the trouble.
- **Massive dictionary search:** www.onelook.com/ 993 dictionaries. Accepts definition. (For style, stick to Webster's New World)

Look up quotes, song titles & lyrics

- **Bartleby** www.bartleby.com: Mother lode of literature and older reference books. Also:

www.quotationspage.com/: librarian's collection of smaller sources.

- **The Bible:** Gospel.com bible.gospelcom.net/bible If it isn't here, it isn't worth quoting. Other religious references: www.beliefnet.com/index/index_10004.html
- **Encyclopedia Mythica:** www.pantheon.org: Well-supported private site.
- **Internet Movie Database** imdb.com most popular commercial site.
- **Lyrics:** (Note that printed lyrics are often different from what singers actually sing).
 - Sing365: www.sing365.com/index.html: current pop music;
 - www.lyrics-of-songs.net : ditto.
 - Folk music: www.mudcat.org: the Digital Tradition.
 - Aria Database: www.aria-database.com

Book titles

- **Library of Congress** www.loc.gov: Definitive.
- **Amazon.com** www.amazon.com: Fast. Also try books.google.com

Looking up Web page info

- **Betterwhois.com:** www.betterwhois.com/ Searches multiple registrars. Whois: <http://www.domaintools.com/>
- **Alexa:** www.alexa.com/ Alexa usage info is derived from Alexa subscribers and may not reflect the whole net.

Tips, advice and commentary

- **Journalism.net:** Search tips www.journalismnet.com/tips/index.htm
- **Word Court : Clever page based on Atlantic Monthly columns:** www.wordcourt.com/index2.html
- **Roy Peter Clark on hype:** "When the news or topic is most serious, understate. When the topic is least serious, exaggerate." Maybe the single most annoying writing problem in newspapers or to readers or the hardest to fix. Read more at www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=65648&sid=2
- **John McIntyre's blog:** blogs.baltimoresun.com/about_language/
- **Bill Walsh's blog:** theslot.blogspot.com/ (There are quite a few other editors' blogs, including <http://newsdesigner.com/blog/> Mark Friesen <http://nstockdale.blogspot.com/> Nicole Stockdale)

Worth a look

- ACES ... www.copydesk.org ... Ohio Aces www.ohioaces.org/ ... Editteach.org:

www.editteach.org/ (Deb. Gump at Ohio University)

- **Alternative search engines**
 - Alexa www.alexa.com/
 - Brainboost: www.brainboost.com . Tries to produce answers, besides Web pages. Natural language. Other tools.
 - Factbites, focuses on reference sources: www.factbites.com/ Small index.
 - MSN: search.msn.com
 - Kartoo www.kartoo.com/flash04.php3 -- fascinating graphic approach.
 - Vivisimo vivisimo.com/ -- Easiest to work with.
- **Phil Bradley's list of indexes:** www.philb.com/whichengine.htm. Also, www.rbbi.com/links/sengine.htm
- **Forthright's Phrontistery:** phrontistery.info/ Obscure-English-word lists and language resources.
- **The Acronym Finder:** www.acronymfinder.com
- **Online Etymology Dictionary** www.etymonline.com
- **Newsmap** www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/newsmap.cfm Visual news aggregation. Best of several for clever use of color.
- **Today's front pages:** www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/
- **Romenesko's Medianews** at Poynter: www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45
- **Topix:** www.topix.net/ a good choice among news pages, but there are many. Has cool geographical-forum guide.
- **What font is that?** www.identifont.com/
- **And ...**
- The ultimate application of the Internet, applying 8 billion pages ó a significant fraction of all human knowledge ó to the question of what's for dinner ... **Cookin' with Google** -- www.researchbuzz.org/cookin_with_google.shtml

Here are most of the other sites cited in the PowerPoint, in no particular order

- www.quotationspage.com/ Calif. librarian's collection.
- <http://newzingo.com/> Colorful news aggregator
- <http://www.memorandum.com/> Aggregator of blogs
- <http://news.com.com/> CNet tech news
- Newsmap: <http://www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/newsmap.cfm>
- <http://www.specialissues.com/lol/> (Price's list of lists)
- <http://dir.yahoo.com/> Yahoo directories
- <http://www.faganfinder.com/> Obsolete but still useful
- <http://ez2find.com/> Meta-search
- <http://exalead.com> Meta-search
- <http://www.vivisimo.com> Meta-search with clusters

- <http://www.a9.com/> Amazonís approach
- <http://www.alexa.com/> ditto
- <http://www.business.com/> Business & businessmen
- <http://www.zoominfo.com/Search/> ditto.
- <http://www.pretrieve.com/> Scary people-finder
- <http://www.turboscout.com/index.php> Compare searches
- <http://ranking.thumbshots.com/> Ditto
- http://www.virtualchase.com/quality/checklist_print.html
- <http://www.jux2.com/> Compare searches
- <http://searchenginewatch.com> Useful if geeky
- <http://maps.google.com> Maps and photos
- <http://maps.yahoo.com/> Ditto
- <http://maps.a9.com/> Ditto
- <http://www.zillow.com/local> Aerial photo + house values
- <http://www.encyclopedia.com/> Columbia Desk Encyclopedia
- <http://www.uspto.gov/main/trademarks.htm>

I hope this helps. Pete Zicari