

Fetch information with Cyberhound



EMORY DANIELS

Internet Databases. "The first edition was labeled "The Gale Guide to Internet Databases."

A thousand databases were added to the second edition, making a total of 2,748 domestic and international databases listings.

Cyberhound uses non-technical language to tell about government, academic, research, educational databases. New to this edition is a rating system that evaluates each database's content, design, and ease of use.

Ratings range from one to four stars in three areas:

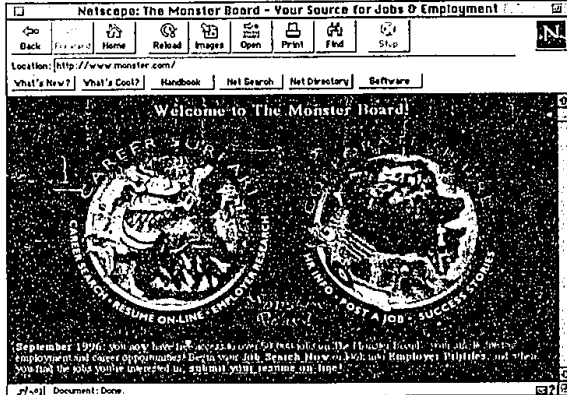
- Content ratings cover comprehensiveness, authoritativeness and timeliness;
- Design ratings deal with use of graphics, layout and overall concept;
- Technical merit ratings provide information on ease of navigation, searchability, logical presentation, and validity of links.

"Web sites are being continuously developed, and anybody with space on a server can put their stuff out there," explains Gwen Turecki, Cyberhound editor. "This creates a dilemma -- the information that users may need is probably on the Internet, but how do they find it, evaluate it and quickly sort through the good, bad and the ugly to find information that suits their needs?"

"This is where Cyberhound comes to the rescue. We could've rated sites by our mood of the moment, but we didn't. We created a checklist of objective criteria for each site that our experts used to determine how a database would rate."

To make location of databases easy to find in the guide, Cyberhound (under Gwen's direction, of course) created five indexes: master, subject, host/provider, white pages, and alternate format.

The announcement Cheryl sent piqued my imagination with some examples, such as The Moon and Groan Page at <http://www.wwww.tslrxrds.com/moon/> which tries to give advice on how to avoid buying lemons (unless you need a lemon) or free access to 55,000 jobs via The Monster Board at <http://www.monster.com>.



Monster Jobs: There are more than 55,000 jobs openings posted on The Monster Board at <http://www.monster.com>.

Among the interesting sites listed in Cyberhound were Classical Music Home Page, NETworth, and Treasures of the Czars. But I won't give the URLs for these sites; otherwise, why would you be interested in looking at Cyberhound. So if you are interested, go to Gale's home page at <http://www.gale.com> or call 800-877-GALE.

Founded in 1954, Gale Research is a leading reference publisher with more than 600 active databases. Located in Detroit's Penobscot Building, Gale serves the information needs of libraries, businesses, nonprofit organizations and consumers via print, online and CD-ROM products.

This Week's Jewels

■ Speaking of databases, Kitty Bennett, who is news researcher for the St. Petersburg Times, shares her discovery of the Great Fat Cats database at http://www.mojo.com/colop_congress/mojo_400/mojo_400.html. "Has everybody but me already noticed the Mother Jones 400, an interactive database of -- as they put it -- "the fittest of the Fat Cats."

As part of my routine noodling around I usually check web sites just for fun. I just stumbled across this list this afternoon. They have meaty, and actually pretty amusing, profiles of the Fat Cats, and simple explanations of bundling, soft money, etc." I

shared the job Mother Jones is doing in an earlier column on politics or campaign financing.

■ Gleason Sackman of the Net-Happenings List discovered a site of political cartoons at <http://imggserve.com/centerootery.html> where surfers will find humorous, tasteful, political cartoonists. The site was displayed on CNN in August. There also are quizzes, polls, audio impersonations. Order birthday cards and t-shirts from the White House and t-shirts.

■ Mike Schelling of Ft. Washington, Md., feels many online will want to check out the Heart & Stroke Guide at <http://www.amhrt.org/heartg/ab16.htm> to access information on almost 300 subjects from the American Heart Association. Among the topics covered are Adams-Stokes disease, ambulatory cardiac catheterization, aspirin and heart attacks, a trial fibrillation, blood pressure levels, brain attack, chelation therapy, chicken skin, cholesterol in children, dental care and heart disease, desirable weight table, diabetesmellitus, dining out, infants and diet, innocent heart murmurs, Kawasaki disease, Marfan Syndrome, Mediterranean Diet, Spanish materials, stroke symptoms and warning signs, Wolff-Parkinson-White Syndrome, women and heart disease.

Emory Daniels may be reached via email at emory@online.com. Past columns are archived at <http://online.com/~1-emoryd/archive.html>.

BUSINESS MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features a glimpse of Oakland County Business news and notes. Write: *Business Marketplace, Eccentric Newspapers, Birmingham Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.*

■ **STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**
Southfield-based Giffels Associates, Inc. and Minnesota-based Aero Systems Engineering formed an alliance to design, integrate and supply complete vehicular test facilities for the automotive, truck and heavy equipment industries. The alliance will provide vehicle manufacturers and components suppliers with a gallery of services for facility design, construction, renovation and operation of virtually every type of testing facility, including wind tunnels, climatic chambers, dynamometer test cells, and anechoic chambers. The combined experience makes the alliance one of the world's foremost suppliers of test facilities.

■ **NEW CLIENT**
Target Marketing Group in Birmingham will handle marketing, advertising, public relations and special events for The Society of Lifetime Planning in Troy. Target is now working on the society's two-day symposium and exhibit at Meadow Brook's Shotwell Pavilion in Rochester Hills. It's aimed at adults older than 50 who are considering retirement. The agency also is developing a 60-minute radio talk show for the society.

■ **SALES AWARD**
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■ **JOINS COUNCIL**
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■ **CAREER WOMEN**
The National Association of Career Women's 13th annual conference will run Friday to Sunday, Oct. 18-20, at the Thomas Edison Inn, Port Huron. To register information, call (810) 825-6423.

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Reuther Middle School	http://oseonline.com-rms
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ENTERTAINMENT	http://www.totalmarketing.com/gallery
ENVIRONMENT	http://oseonline.com/irvasec
EYE CARE/LASER SURGERY	http://www.greenbergye.com
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Pasoboy's	http://oseonline.com/dineout/pasoboy.html
Phoenicia	http://oseonline.com/dineout/phoenicia.html
Rugby Grille	http://oseonline.com/dineout/rugbygrille.html
Stew's Backroom	http://www.stewsbackroom.com
SURPLUS FOAM	http://oseonline.com/birmingham
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SURPLUS PRODUCTS	http://www.henrysurplus.com
TECHNICAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	http://www.mcau-plus.com
ACRO Service Corp.	http://oseonline.com/acro.html
TRAINING	http://www.virtuallife.com
WELD GUN PRODUCTS	http://www.smilite.com
WINE	http://oseonline.com/edgwinehome.html

Barter from page D1

Mercier discovered his niche within the metropolitan business community in 1978 by advocating the barter system, and his recent appointment as president of the 104-member National Association of Trade Exchanges (NATE), the nation's largest group of independent barter associations, gives him an opportunity to marry old-world business principles with 20th Century technology.

"It used to be that in order to buy anything you had to walk or drive to retail shops, but now we can connect with people around the world," Mercier said. "This is the first time in the history of mankind that we have a worldwide retail community, and the barter industry is taking full advantage of the Internet."

The association's newly-completed home page on the Internet offers a three-pronged entry into the bartering world for those interested in learning more about bartering, and a section for association members only for retail and wholesale bartering. Mercier stresses a day when transactions rely solely on a universal currency backed by tangible goods and services.

"Instead of using their association credit cards, members would instead make purchases with cyber cash, an innovation Mercier may realize during his presidency. In nearly 40 years, starting has been led from

small barter clubs, to individual trade exchanges like Metro Trading to the advent of Internet bartering which will eventually link 4,500 trade exchanges nationwide.

"With the Internet, we now have a tool to keep track of a myriad number of transactions which gives bartering a visibility I've never seen before," Mercier said. "The computer will eliminate one-on-one trading, we will instead trade in a pool," of members, which ranges from retail to the construction trades, like Dave Barlow, owner of Landscape Design & Construction, a Troy-based business and charter Metro Trading Association member.

For a \$350 membership fee and \$15 monthly dues, members amass trade dollars, which are accounted for by the trade association on an actual credit card. When members buy services from each other with trade credit, it is established.

The association's trade brokers help members find fellow members to facilitate transactions.

"It's like a VISA card for a captive audience," Barlow said. "I can't pay the light bill or buy gas from a gas station with my card, but I can get service-oriented things," like a new roof for his home and repairs for his fleet of eight trucks. In return, Barlow

builds brick pavers and landscapers homes for association members.

"Say a guy raises chickens and he gets tired of eating chicken so he goes to the guy down the road who raises pigs and is tired of eating pork," Barlow said. "The guy gives him a pig and the other guy trades him 50 chickens. If you work at using the membership -- and if you have a brain -- the credits are easy to spend. People who say they can't spend the money aren't trying hard enough."

And if members still incur problems, Mercier distributes membership directories and bi-monthly newsletters to keep members abreast of new clients, and potential pitfalls.

In the Aug. Sept. issue, Mercier posted on the front page a list of revoked association members who over-charged fellow members. "We also limit the number of members in a particular industry," he said, "by doing that, we've taken out a major business factor, competitor, but we have to replace that with rules."

Financial figures seem to support Mercier's lofty predictions for bartering's future. The Metro Trading Association's brokers cleared approximately \$10 million in volume last year and with the Internet's help, he forecasts an 800 percent increase in business by 2008 -- which he says is

a solid response to a sound business approach. "People who use the bartering system pay for goods and services with a promise of providing goods or services in the future," Mercier said. "We don't want to change a business from a cash to a trade business, we just want to put to a productive use the waste that exists in business."

Unused assets like excess inventory are quickly converted by the association's brokers into assets for clients with diverse companies ranging from pizza parlors to medical firms. Brokers link the desperately seeking, with the desperately selling. Mercier travels to a NATE national meeting next month in Las Vegas, basically a massive networking session aimed at increasing business opportunities for members.

While there, he will help administer training and marketing programs to help lead other trading associations toward his futuristic goals. Oakland Unified's Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion will host Metro Trading's trade show Oct. 29 where he will try to advance a principle founded on support and fairness, not profit.

"Bartering has always been the backbone of the economy," Mercier said. "Businesses shouldn't look to the government for help. They need to look to one another for salvation."