Gateways: A cottage industry going places?

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The challenge

“First I searched for Larry in Yahoo, then Lycos, Excite and Infoseek. Eventually, I found him in the bathroom.”
The solution?

• Do not go seeking the holy grail
• There are many solutions
• The trick is to develop a package of cost effective solutions
Current solutions at UQ

- Library catalogue:
  - 1 million records (all formats)
  - 7,800 ejournals and databases
  - 3,300 websites and ebooks
- Database gateway (500)
- Electronic journal gateway (7,300)
- Virtual reference collection
- FindIts (subject pathfinders)
- Subject gateways:
  - AVEL (lead site)
  - Weblaw (lead site)
  - ALEG
  - Agrigate
  - Metachem
  - Australian Digital Theses
Enter the Gateway

- Discover
- Filter
- Index
- Describe
- Deliver
- Maintain
What’s a subject gateway?

• “An Internet accessible collection of descriptions and location details for a range of information, generally available electronically, organised by subject or discipline, and selected for inclusion based on a published set of quality criteria” [Debbie Campbell]

• “… provides searchable and browsable access to online resources focused around a specific subject. Subject gateway resource descriptions are usually created manually rather than being generated via an automated process. Because the resource entries are generated by hand they are usually superior to those available from a conventional web search engine.” [Imesh]
Other terms for subject gateway

- Internet gateway
- Web gateway
- Gateway
- Internet resource catalogue
- Vortal
- Hubs – collection of gateways
How many gateways?

- **Australia:**
  - 18 Established
  - 5 Under Development

- **Worldwide:**
  - Particularly strong in UK and Europe
  - Starting to emerge in North America

- **Beware of imitations**
  - Portals
  - check under the bonnet
Case study: AVEL

- The Australasian Virtual Engineering Library (AVEL)
- A subject gateway for engineering and information technology (IT) resources
- Partnership of libraries, academics, industry and professional organisations
- Seed funding from DETYA and partners
- 3,500 records
Why AVEL?

- no Australasian-based, user-centred comprehensive source of engineering & IT information on the Web
- lack of awareness amongst researchers about what is available
- lack of knowledge, skills and time to find relevant & quality information efficiently
- difficulty in keeping up-to-date in rapidly developing areas
- building national, regional and global R&D networks between universities, industry and research establishments
- being a partner in a global network of WWW gateways to engineering and information technology (IT) resources
Gateway planning

- relationship with partners
- relationship with other gateways
- user community
- resource selection criteria
- range of services
- software
- metadata schema
- classification schemes
- maintenance
- sustainability
Gateway software

- repository - maintenance, importing and exporting records, statistics
- manual entry tool
- automated entry tool – metadata harvesting
- search interface - features, display, statistics
- browse interface
- customised interface
- what’s new
Discovering Customer Needs

- focus groups
- analysis of suggestions
- website usage statistics
- online survey
Q3 Which AVEL services do you use?

- 21% AVEL Newsletter
- 14% Australian Digital Theses
- 10% Conference Announcements
- 9% Fulltext Papers
- 9% Latest Resources Added
- 8% Online Bookshop
- 9% SciTech Newsletter
- Other or Not Specified
Current Developments

- New Software
- Cross-searching & interoperability
- AVELSD
- Pilot online bookstore
- Australian Digital Theses and New Zealand Digital Library

- Site Design
- Evaluation
- e-Knowledge Net
Gateways: A cottage industry going places?

- Gateways have a future as a niche market solution to untangling the Web
- High risk
- Understand your dynamic marketplace
- Leverage your investment as much as possible
- Critical mass of records
- Develop a sustainable business structure
- Leverage the risk by taking on suitable partners
Want to learn more about gateways?

Visit the Australian Subject Gateways Forum Website:

EVERYTHING THESE DAYS IS DOT-COM THIS AND DOT-NET THAT! I JUST CAN’T STAND IT ANYMORE!!!

I KNOW A WEB SITE THAT CAN HELP YOU...

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