after hours: *on line*

During this month's cyber-surfing, Terry Pinnell operates a telescope, gets nostalgic over some old photographs, and tries to take the temperature of the very best sites

Windows 95 downloads

From the vast amount of Windows 95 software available for download, you can soon compile a generous collection of handy Web and Internet tools. Apart from the official Windows page, try Win95.com, a sort of unofficial Windows support site, with software organised clearly into categories, including Internet and Network shareware. Within that are dozens of potentially useful programs, including several to help you manage and search bookmarks, view previously seen sites off line, and get automatic notification of any changes made to pages you've specified. It makes use of frames, so you'll need Netscape 2.0 to get the full effect.

http://www.microsoft.com/
http://www.windows95.com

Anorak

Odd, how an item of clothing can become a commonplace term of disparagement, but this site revels in the label. It's basically a one-stop summary for tabloid fans, complete with rumour, gossip, innuendo, and lots of pictures. But much of the fun of cyber-surfing comes from the surprise element, and these pages are relatively fast to download, so why not check them out for yourself?

http://www.anorak.co.uk

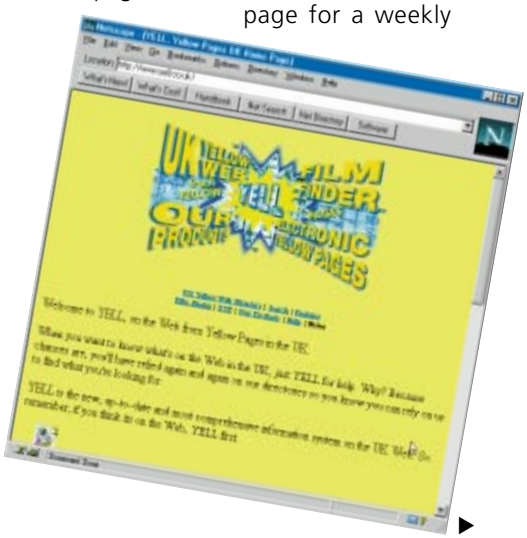
Beatles

There are several good Web sources of Beatles material to suit fans of all persuasions, from the mildly curious to the out-and-out obsessive. For the latter, The Beatles Reference Page will appeal. There's a lot of useful factual content, and also links taking you to an article proving that 'All The Beatles Are Dead EXCEPT Paul', and another posing the gripping question: 'George Harrison's Birthdate – Was George born on February 24 or 25? Some new evidence is provided by saki in this article.' In contrast, the Press Association's Beatles Archive is packed with hundreds of well-presented, fascinating old photographs, mainly black and white, of the Fab Four's early days. Each has a short description and you can e-mail orders for prints of any of them direct from the site.

http://www.pa.press.net
http://www.primenet.com/~dhaber/beatles.html

Yellow Pages

A nice site from BT, YELL (as in Yell for help) has the potential to become a great source of reference to all sorts of topics on UK Web pages. You can browse a Features page for a weekly



Steps to getting started

1 Install a fast modem on your PC (ideally 28,800 Kbs).
2 For full Internet access, open an account with one of the many Internet Service Providers, within local call range.
3 If you can afford the additional cost, extend your scope by opening another account with a general on-line service provider, within local call range. You may be able to combine **2** and **3** with a single provider, but separate services generally provide better performance.
4 Install software for browsing the Web and using other Net and on-line services, plus off-line utilities.
5 Several 'Internet connectivity kits' are available which package the above elements into one bundle.
6 Revise your phone budget and possibly your sleeping habits.

Glossary
popular gobbledegook

FTP	File Transfer Protocol; an 'FTP site' is a source for downloading files.
HTML	Hypertext Mark-up Language; for making Web pages.
IRC	Inter Relay Chat; using the Net like a CB radio.
IP	Internet Protocol; an addressing system.
ISP	Internet Service Provider; sometimes confusingly abbreviated to IP.
JPEG	Joint Photographic Experts Group, popular graphics file format (JPG).
PPP	Point-to-Point Protocol; communications program.
SLIP	Serial Line Internet Protocol; another program for communications.
UUE	UUEncoded files used with Internet News Groups.
URL	Uniform Resource Locator; Web addressing system.

Contacts
Major on-line services:
Compuserve: 0800 289378
CIX: 0181 296 9666
AOL: 0800 376 5432
UK Online: 01749 333300

Internet service providers
Pipex: 01223 250100
Demon: 0181 371 1234
Pinnacle: 01293 613686
Direct Connection: 0181 297 2200
Cityscape: 01223 566950
Cygnet Internet Services: 0181 880 4650

updated selection of what's happening on the UK Web, search by subject or theme using its key word Search facility, or try the Film Finder to find out what movies are on, and view summaries of the latest. There's also an on-line classified information section to help you find local services, and many links to other interesting pages.
http://www.yell.co.uk/

Cool, hot, or tepid?

A few hours on the Web will leave you in no doubt about its most over-used four-letter word. All those admirable things that not long ago were 'hot' are now 'cool'. There are literally thousands of sites which claim to be hot lists of cool stuff. You'll have your own view as to whether 'The Capt. James T. Kirk Sing-a-ling Page' and 'The lyrics to the Spiderman cartoon TV show' qualify, but hey!, whatever grabs you. Anyway, many of the site's other links prove well worth a visit, such as 'The Virtual Pub', 'Cool Site of the Day'. And don't ignore Netscape's own links page just because it's so accessible with that button. Needless to say, I didn't risk looking at 'Cool Word of the Day'.

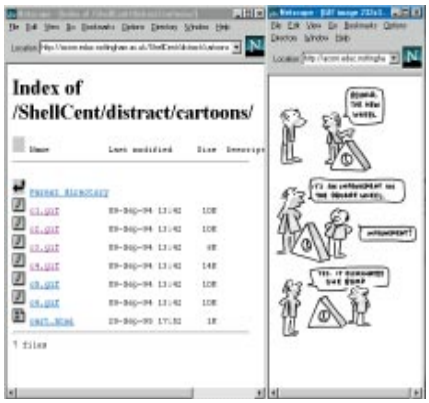
http://www.infi.net/cool.html
http://www.ganet.net/~ml1/cool.htm
http://lager.geo.brown.edu:8080/virtual-pub/index.html
http://home.netscape.com/home/whats-cool.html

Heavenly bodies

Using this site gives you access to a powerful telescope at the University of Bradford. After a registration process, you can specify the moon, planets, stars, galaxies and other astronomical targets, either by using predefined suggestions, copying others' choices, or (for those who know what their Right Ascensions are for), specifying the precise stellar co-ordinates at which you want to aim the telescope. Up to three of your targets are then queued, and you pick up the images when completed. However, heavy demand and poor night time weather conditions (this is Bradford, not Mount Palomar) can mean a long wait.
http://www.telescope.org/

Light relief

University-based sites, here and abroad, are prolific sources of all sorts of material. If you come across an interesting target but with an FTP adress, just try entering it straight in, preceded with 'ftp://' instead of 'http://', and you'll usually succeed. Even the home pages of those with a WWW address can look a bit daunting, presenting dry lists of multi-level directories at first. But perseverance often reveals gems, such as the off-beat cartoons at this Nottingham site.
http://acorn.educ.nottingham.ac.uk/ShellCent/distract/cartoons/



Feedback welcomed:

Terry Pinnell: **102404.2400@compuserve.com** or
What PC?: **70007.5417@compuserve.com** or **andon@dial.pipex.com**