after hours: *on line*

Terry Pinnell spices up his act, links his links, and proves that The King is alive, as well as swotting up on a Star Wars revival

Glancing back at earlier columns, I'm darned if I can always recall the theme or pattern I had in mind for the Web sites that I included. Mind you, that's surfing serendipity for you – it's a lucky dip sort of activity. For this month at least, I'll have a crack at linking my choices. If radio DJs can do it...

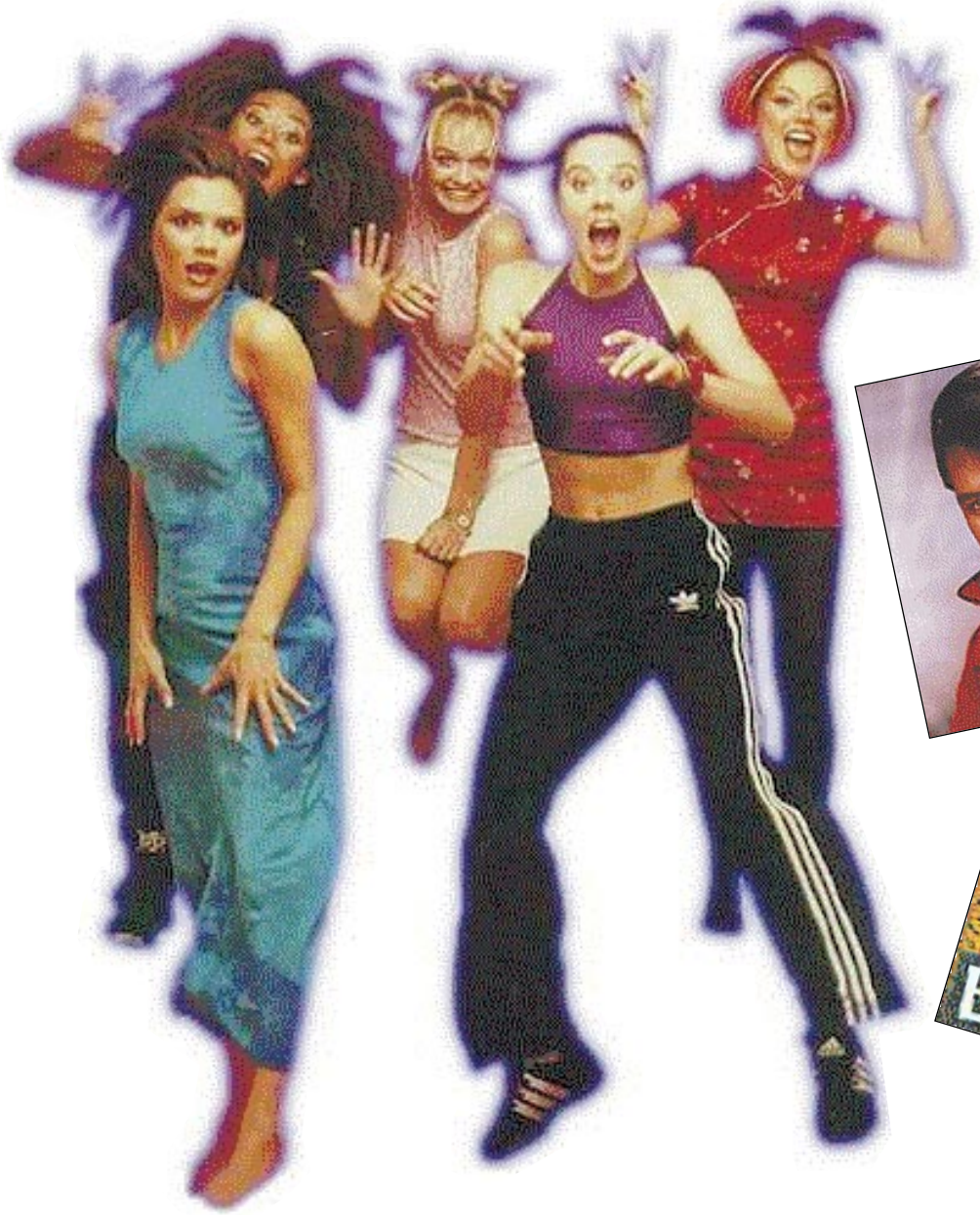
Crisis – get help!

OK, no looking at the picture – what has 10 legs and is an anagram of 'crisis – get help'? Given their meteoric rise to fame, including their recent Brit Awards, it's hardly surprising that the Spice Girls are already the subjects of many Web sites. My first draft said 'several', but the number is going up by leaps and bounds every week, and is now well over 100. For one good list, try the Pacific address below.

Not surprisingly, one of the best sites is the official one by Virgin Records, copyright owner of all Spice Girls words, music and videos. From here, there's a link to an interesting interactive site called 'The Spice Web'. This has been designed using a new multimedia solution called QuarkImmedia, but the Windows version (as opposed to the one for the Mac) is still in beta and does occasionally crash the PC.

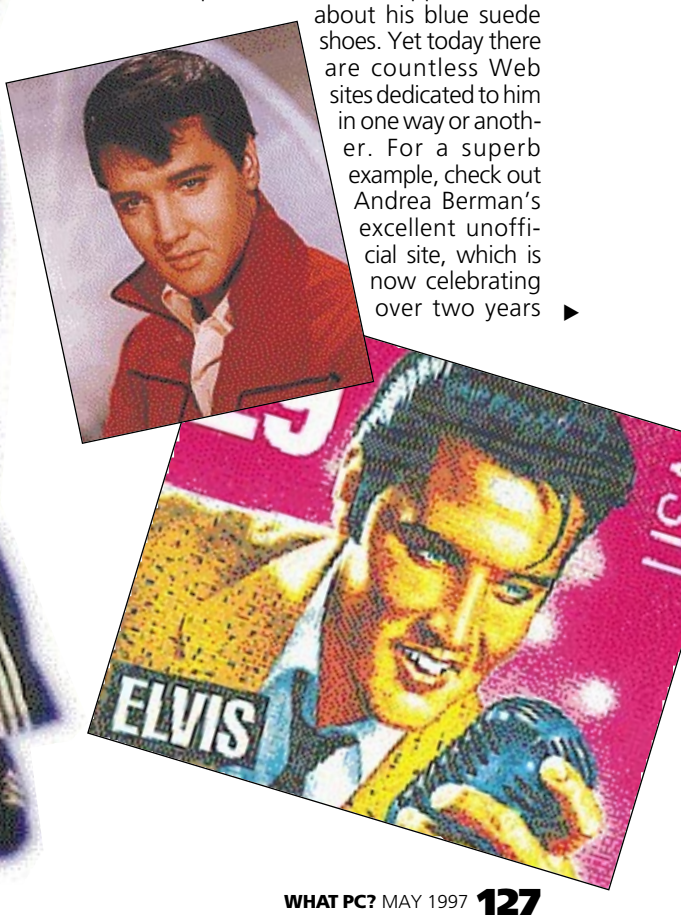
Other spicy sites include 'The Spice Shack' and 'da Spice Girls', where you can find biographical details as well as lots of graphics. Intimate trivia features strongly on many of these Web pages. For example, on the Biodec site, we learn that 21-year-old Victoria's greatest regret is 'Not having a boob job' and that when asked which talent she would most like to have, 18-year-old Emma revealed that it was 'Eating 100 doughnuts in 10 minutes'.

- channel3.vmg.co.uk/spicegirls/
- web2.ukonline.co.uk/Members/gary.fenton/index.htm
- home.pacific.net.sg/~hohuang/spice/links.htm
- biodec.wustl.edu/matt/spice/index.html
- ds.dial.pipex.com/paulrogers/spgirls/page5.htm



Elvis

Do you think the Spice Girls will still be as famous 40 years after their 1996 debut, as Elvis Presley is today many years after his death? It's a long time since 'The King' was all shook up and somewhat apprehensive about his blue suede shoes. Yet today there are countless Web sites dedicated to him in one way or another. For a superb example, check out Andrea Berman's excellent unofficial site, which is now celebrating over two years ▶



getting started

In six easy steps...

1 Install a fast modem on your PC (preferably 28.8 or 36.6Kbits/s).

2 For full Internet access, open an account with one of the many Internet Service Providers (ISPs), within local call range.

3 If you can afford the extra 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 'Internet connectivity kits' are available which package the above elements into one bundle.

6 Revise your phone budget and free up a lot of hard drive space.

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.
Winsock	Windows Socket; standard interface between applications (like Netscape) and networking protocols (like PPP).

Contacts

major on-line services and ISPs

Pipex 01223 250100
CompuServe 0800 289378
CIX 0181 296 9666
Microsoft 0800 750800
AOL 0800 376 5432
UK Online 01749 333300
Demon 0181 371 1234
Pinnacle 01293 613686
Direct Connection 0181 297 2200
BT 0345 776666
Cityscape 01223 566950
Global Internet 0181 957 1003

on line. This site regularly attracts deserved praise, such as that from Point Communications which rates the site in its 'Top 5% of the Web'. Everything remotely connected with Elvis is here: the Graceland tour, photos, auditions for Elvis lookalikes, Elvis shrines and religions, song lyrics – the lot.

The site even includes a message from Elvis himself. Just click on the downloaded sound file and in his unmistakable Tennessee drawl you'll hear: 'I just wanna thank Andrea Berman for the fine job of work she's done on my home page.' If you still needed any convincing that Elvis is not actually dead, this obviously clinches it.

- sunsite.unc.edu/elvis/frameright.html
- anacom.com/elvis/

Star Wars

Turning to stars of the galactic type, here's another official site that's overwhelmingly outnumbered by unofficial ones from enthusiasts. This one covers a screen promotion that can't have escaped your attention: the revival of the 20-year-old *Star Wars* trilogy: *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.

Millions have been spent on injecting new computerised animation and effects – did they even have electricity 20 years ago? – and the re-launch should be coming to a cinema near you at around the time you read this. The site is buzzing with news, games, images and sound-clips, and for the kids there are pictures to download and colour in. LucasFilm, the site owners, are taking a much more tolerant approach than some others about copyright, so there are hundreds of other Star Wars pages. You'll find pictures of all the old favourites, such as Luke Sky-Walker, Princess Leia, and of course the rather nasty Darth Vader.

But joke not – many take their Star Wars very seriously indeed. Whatever your view, there's no denying that Star Wars has been a part of popular culture ever since those first imperial space battleships roared across the cinema screen, before some *What PC?* readers were even born. More recently, the Internet has spawned intense discussion about every facet of the trilogy. Drama, spectacle, trivia – they're all on the Web. After the official site, try some of the URLs below.

- www.starwars.com/home.html
- www.zdnet.com/yil/content/mag/9703/startop10.html
- phoenix.calpoly.edu/~smbrenna/Downloads/taun.jpg
- www.mac.drake.edu/p/mikep/images/starwars/vader02.jpg
- www.ifi.uio.no/~thomabe/pic/starwars/Luke.jpg

Feedback welcomed:

You can e-mail Terry Pinnell at 102404.2400@compuserve.com or send your comments to us at *What PC?*: whatpc@vnu.co.uk