

# after hours: *on line*

Continuing his cruise along the infobahn, this month Terry Pinnell checks in for a browser upgrade, enjoys the luxury of some armchair shopping and then pops into the Louvre to collect a few of his favourite Cézannes to take home



## Internet Explorer

Given the Web's dominance, it's not surprising that Web browsers are one of today's hottest software topics. Netscape's Navigator has long been the most popular, but its main rival, Microsoft's Internet Explorer, is beginning to catch up.

One reason why this is happening might be because Netscape is becoming so huge; the latest beta version is more than 6Mb, so downloading it certainly isn't a trivial affair. Its leaner competitor, while still no lightweight, is about half the size.

Internet Explorer has a Web site that's worth a regular visit. By the time you read this, you'll probably be able to download the eagerly awaited version 3.0, which will have many improvements. One, hopefully, will be a better newsreader, as the one in version 2.0 is unimpressive. Even more important, I'm hoping the e-mail facility will part company with the ponderous Exchange, which must surely be the ultimate sledgehammer for private e-mail.  
<http://www.microsoft.com/ie/>

## The Louvre

The World Wide Arts Resources page holds an impressive register to help enthusiasts locate thousands

of visual arts entries anywhere on the World Wide Web. Among the many art galleries, exhibitions and museums catalogued, the famous Louvre in Paris is well represented. Another route to the Louvre can be

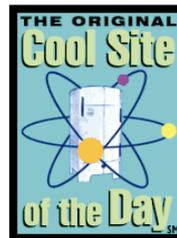


found at the Web-Museum, and from either site you can view some of the world's classic masterpieces – and take the pictures home too!

<http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm>

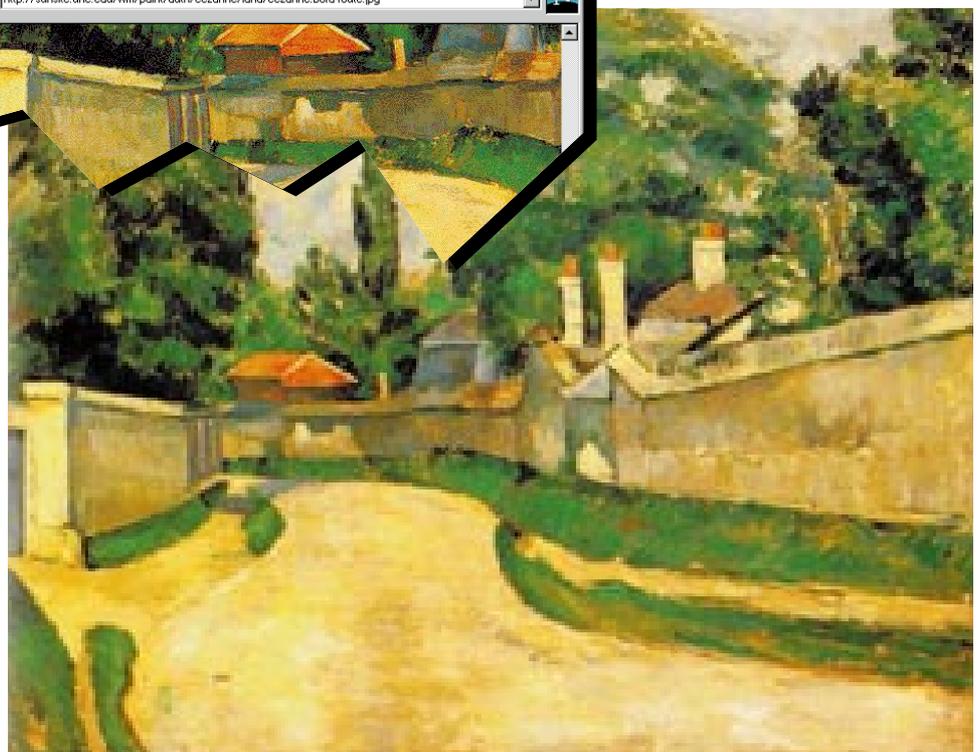
<http://sunsite.unc.edu/wm/paint/auth/cezanne/land/cezanne.bord-route.jpg>

<http://wwar.com/index.html>



## In the bag

Several sites offer on-screen shopping and Great Universal Store's 'ShoppersUniverse' Web site is one of the latest. Simply pick up a virtual bag and go armchair shopping – glass of wine in hand, if you wish. There's a fair variety of goods on offer, from companies such as ▶





### Steps to getting started

- 1 Install a fast modem on your PC (ideally 28,800bps).
- 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 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 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.
- Winsock** Windows Socket; standard interface between applications (like Netscape) and networking protocols (like PPP).

### Contacts

#### Major on-line services and/or Internet Service Providers:

- Pipex:** 01223 250100  
**Compuserve:** 0800 289378  
**CIX:** 0181 296 9666  
**Microsoft:** 0800 750800  
**AOL:** 0800 376 5432  
**UK Online:** 01749 333366  
**Demon:** 0181 371 1234  
**Pinnacle:** 01293 613686  
**Direct Connection:** 0181 297 2200  
**BT:** 0345 776666  
**Cityscape:** 01223 566950

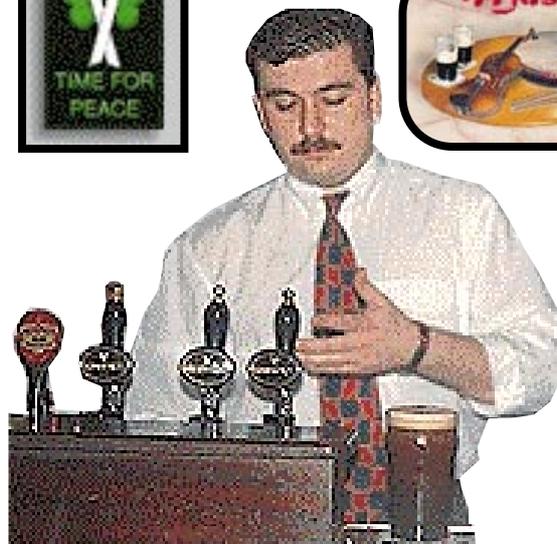


Burberrys, Essential Electrics, The Gift Box, Interflora, PC Sports and Sound Byte.

When I entered 'driving' into the overall quick search option it gave me only one hit, a £19.99 multimedia tuition program called Driving Instructor from Software Station, so presumably *Driving Miss Daisy* was not in stock at The Video Vault.

Each time that you find an item you want, you add it to your bag (the button was surprisingly obscure though), and you can check its contents and cost at any time. Future developments in the pipeline include 3D modelling to improve the 'touch and feel' of the virtual shopping area. Happily, though, reality does already stop short of crowds and car parking – but payment is, unfortunately, as real as ever.

- <http://shoppersuniverse.com/>
- <http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk>
- <http://www.tesco.co.uk>
- <http://www.itl.net/barclaysquare>



### Microsoft in site

Microsoft's well-designed multi-page home site is a logical place to start looking for up-to-date information. The main page is almost entirely self-contained, and when it does link you to sites outside its responsibility (like the popular Euro 96 site), it warns you in advance – perhaps in case you stumble across anything unsavoury.

It's built on a truly grand scale



and provides access to around 100 separate Microsoft pages, so there must be a veritable army keeping it spic and span. Despite its size, navigation is simple because the site is well organised in the familiar Windows folder-fashion. Most people will probably prefer to start from the Microsoft UK page, for faster access to specific UK-oriented content.

- <http://www.microsoft.com/uk/>
- <http://www.microsoft.com/Misc/Index.htm>

### Virtually at random

Assuming you're surfing during a cheap phone period, it's fun to occasionally simply follow your nose around the Web. I started recently from InfiNet's 'Cool Site of the Day', and was interested to see that 'The Spot' (which we included here in May) came out top on 'Cool Site of The Year'. I took the long way back via a couple of pubs, including 'The Virtual Irish Pub', a friendly spot which we'll return to for a closer look some other time.

- <http://cool.infi.net/>
- <http://cool.infi.net/csoty.html>
- <http://www.thespot.com/>
- <http://www.misty.com/ulysses/vip/index.html>
- <http://www.planetary.brown.edu:8080/virtual-pub/>

### Feedback welcomed:

- Terry Pinnell: 102404.2400@compuserve.com
- Or What PC?: 70007.5417@compuserve.com
- Or andon@dial.pipex.com