

# Péter's picks & pans



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**M**y first pick is the Free Online Scholarship (FOS) Newsletter archive edited by Peter Suber, which provides lucid, well-balanced summaries about developments in electronic publishing, digital copyright, and new digital services and products of scholarly communication. The second pick is the new, smartened-up version of FindArticles.com, a free full-text database of nearly 500 scholarly and trade journals and general interest magazines licensed by LookSmart from the Gale Group. The Pan is Wikipedia, an encyclopedia meant to be built from scratch as a worldwide community project by contributions, corrections, and additions from anyone, anytime without any substantial guidelines or formal editorial process. It may be fine for providing an outlet for those who pine to be a member in some community, but it looks more like a prank, to see how the (wo)man of the street and the press fall for it.



the picks

FOS Newsletter Archive

FindArticles.com

Wikipedia

## FOS NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

The FOS Newsletter ([www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos](http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos)) is the brainchild of Peter Suber, a professor of Philosophy at Earlham College. Don't stop reading here—he is well versed in arguing against the incompetency defense for competent people (as practiced by “cunning and dishonest lawyers”), in using Dialog for teaching philosophy, and in discussing the pros and cons of various XML schemas. His background serves him well in the extremely lucid, concise, practical, and balanced reporting of developments in many aspects of electronic publishing, digital copyright, and the future of scholarship. FOS is the acronym he coined for Free Online Scholarship. It covers research papers, conference papers, dissertations, essays, books, and reference sources in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, and is available free of charge on the Web.

Each issue of the newsletter consists of summaries of the latest developments in the field. These summaries are not merely indicative or informative abstracts, but critical summaries, with links to several related sites for background and contrasting opinions. Amidst the many press releases promoting digital products and services masquerading as articles—even sneaked into refereed research papers—it is refreshing to read the opinions of a scholar who consistently looks at both sides of the coin, cuts through the clutter, and points to areas worthy for digging further to find gold. Time and again, he is the first to report on gems of digital scholarship. I found myself fervently disagreeing with him only once, as discussed in the pan section.

Luckily, the newsletter is available also as a searchable archive hosted by Topica ([www.topica.com/lists/suber-fos/read](http://www.topica.com/lists/suber-fos/read)). The weekly issues, including about 500 items, can be keyword-searched using Boolean operators (the default is AND if you don't use operators). There is no field searching, so the entire text of the



Search Results: **infring\* copyright suber** infring\* copyriht Search Messages Help

1 - 4, of 4

List Name	Subject	Author	Date
Free Online Scholarship	<a href="#">FOS Newsletter, 11/9/01</a>	Peter Suber	11/09/01
Free Online Scholarship	<a href="#">FOS Newsletter, 10/26/01</a>	Peter Suber	10/26/01
Free Online Scholarship	<a href="#">FOS Newsletter, 9/6/01</a>	Peter Suber	09/06/01
Free Online Scholarship	<a href="#">[FOS] FOS Newsletter, 7/10/01</a>	Peter Suber	07/10/01

To limit Topica message searches to the FOS Newsletters, include *suber* in your search.

archive is searched. Even when you are at the FOS archive, only the first query searches FOS; a follow-up search is conducted in the entire Topica message collections. Use the BACK button to return to the original query cell for Search in this List. Alternatively, add *suber* to your subject search, *copyright infringement suber*. Although the help file does not tell you, truncation is possible, so you can use *copyright infring\* suber* to retrieve both infringement (two items) and infringing (two items) from the FOS archive.

Matches are not highlighted in full text, but you can use your browser's Find command to locate the passages with the matching term. A comprehensive, very good glossary complements the archive, providing definitions for hundreds of terms, acronyms, and

projects related to digital scholarly publishing. The newsletter keeps you up-to-date, and is much more reliable than some of the fee-based alerting services on commercial database services. They too often forget to reduce their SDI fees even when the update frequency of a database is drastically reduced or the database is not updated for several months in a row.

The well-balanced, evaluative summaries make me spend hours every week following the threads accompanying each item, as did Theseus returning from slaying the Minotaur in the labyrinth. Traditional print publishers would charge hundreds of dollars for such a weekly newsletter. I hope Suber will have the stamina to maintain the newsletter at this level. Ariadne was rewarded by a bridal crown for her good deeds (albeit not

by the primary beneficiary of her guidance). Hopefully, this pick column will increase the number of subscribers to this excellent digital newsletter, encouraging the author to keep publishing it.



## FINDARTICLES.COM

A year ago, I was panning Find-Articles ([www.findarticles.com](http://www.findarticles.com)) from LookSmart for its brain-damaged software that seriously devalued the free full-text database of scholarly and trade publications it licensed from the Gale Group ("Software Makes LookSmart LookDumb," [www2.Hawaii.edu/~jacso](http://www2.Hawaii.edu/~jacso)). By now, the fatal flaw of breaking pre-coordinated subject headings assigned by indexers of the Gale Group into single words and combining them with an OR relation has been eliminated. The results look good—and smart.

No wonder, as the sources covered include nearly 500 scholarly, trade, and pop-culture journals, mostly from 1999 onward. Most of them are excellent, as the database caters to both the professionals and laypersons. It has the entire spectrum, from top-notch scholarly journals to fluffy pop-psychology titles. My search on job burnout yielded 24 items, including a very substantial chapter from the *Annual Review of Psychology*; three excellent research articles about teachers' burnout from the *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, the *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, and the *Academy of Management Review*; a lot of articles from management journals; a couple from InfoWorld, obviously about burnout of information professionals; and a dozen short pieces from popular magazines. True, the articles are text only; there are no illustrations. However, a graphic or photo of a burnt out information professional is not essential. Chances are good that you just need to look in the mirror to see one.

From our field, the sources include *ONLINE*, *EContent*, *Information Today*, *Link-Up*, *Infoworld*, *Internet Magazine*, and *School Library Journal*. Illustrations could be important for

### In other publications

\* In an opinion in the September 6 *\_Nature\_*, the editors argue that we must adopt common metadata standards in order to realize the full promise of electronic publication. Once we have a common standard, metadata should be coded in XML directly in scientific papers. The editors like the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) metadata standard, in part because it is a lowest common denominator and in part because it is already becoming widely adopted. But they argue that some kinds of content will require richer metadata vocabularies. Finally, the editors argue that full-text indexing is more urgent than free online access, although they seem to endorse free access when other priorities have been met.  
<http://www.nature.com/nature/debates/e-access/Articles/opinion2.html>

\* In the September 3 issue of *\_First Monday\_*, Robin Henshaw explores the FOS implications of the trend toward paid placement in the major search engines. If readers and free online articles depend on the major search engines to find one another, then paid placement is a harmful trend. (PS: The good news is that we needn't depend on the major search engines.)  
[http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6\\_9/henshaw/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_9/henshaw/index.html)

\* Also in the September *\_First Monday\_*, Ramzi Nasser and Kamal Abouhedid describe the financial and technical problems facing scholarly journals in Arab countries. Beyond these, they identify what they call an epistemological problem: distrust or suspicion of electronic publication, which could solve the problems facing print journals. (PS: Isn't this problem much wider than the Arab world?)  
[http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6\\_9/nasser/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_9/nasser/index.html)

\* In the same issue of *\_First Monday\_*, Brendan Scott argues that recent revisions of copyright law favoring publishers do very little to prevent infringement. In fact, they tend to aggravate consumer cynicism, which could increase **infringement**. Scott suggests that publishers trade in their

*Search terms are highlighted only if you use your browser's Find command.*

24 article(s) related to: "job burnout"

Avoiding Job Burnout.

Are you bored by your job?

From Los Angeles Business Journal, May 01 2000 by Kristin Wellsley

Page(s): 5

BURNOUT BLUES (job burnout caused by stress)(Brief Article)

Q: I'm totally burned out at the office. Should I tell my boss?

From Black Enterprise, April 07 2000 by Korey A. Wilson

Page(s): 1

JOB BURNOUT.

Key Words work stress, organizational behavior, job engagement, stress management, job-person fit

From **Annual Review of Psychology**, April 19 2001 by Christina Maslach, Wilmar B.

Schaufeli, Michael P. Leiter

Page(s): 23

How to ban job burnout (Column)

Doctors who have difficulty waking up in the morning, difficulty leaving the office at night, and who feel consistently overwhelmed by work demands are...

From Medical Economics, June 22 2000 by Sue Cejka

Page(s): 2

*A FindArticles search for job burnout retrieved 24 highly relevant results.*

some of these, but only for a small fraction. *Searcher* magazine is also covered, but does not appear in the alphabetic journal list or the classified list of journals. In turn, this means that it is not directly searchable. You still can find articles about the Tasini case by Carol Ebbinghouse, who wrote the most competent and balanced pieces, but you can't limit your search to this journal, or browse its list of articles.

There are hotlinks from the descriptor field that work well (not as an exact phrase, though). These prompted me to use *Job stress*, *Stress psychology*, and *Stress management*, each with the research subdivision (although the search is not limited to the descriptor field). The search yielded many results, most of them relevant, especially after adding *teachers* as an additional required word.

The software still does not compete with those of the traditional commercial software. You cannot limit the search to the descriptor or title fields or use proximity operators between two or more words. This is a free service for both searching the full text and either displaying, printing, or emailing it. If *LookSmart* would allow you to limit the search to the descriptor field, an easy task, it would be a

powerful improvement. Limiting the search to scholarly versus trade versus layperson's journals could be implemented with a few lines of code, and would increase the relevance of the searches significantly, matching the interest of the user.



thepan

**WIKIPEDIA**

I have been reviewing general and specialized encyclopedias for years, and I know that not even *Britannica*, *Columbia*, *Grolier*, and *Collier* are perfect. They have some inaccuracies, outdated and incomplete articles, in spite of the million-dollar investments and decades of developments by the best topic experts and editors, who are paid for their contributions. I have been panning in this column and elsewhere projects that I usually refer to as another encyclopedia on your lunch break ([www2.Hawaii.edu/~jacso/extra](http://www2.Hawaii.edu/~jacso/extra)).

It is all right if someone sets out to do a general encyclopedia on his or

her lunch break singlehandedly, or with his or her spouse, or with a bunch of new friends—pining perhaps to create community. The reason I pan these is that their fancy titles, like *Free Internet Encyclopedia* or *TheReference*, make even educated librarians and other decent people provide a link to these pathetic sites on their "My Favorite Web Pages." Others will keep copying their links and thus adding clout to such sites ad nauseam—and that is not all right.

Now we have the latest endeavor that is a joke at best, *Wikipedia* ([www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)). I am afraid it is meant to be a communal encyclopedia of the people, by the people, and for the people, which shall not perish from the earth, even if it looks like a prank.

What is *Wikipedia*? Well, *pedia* is a derivative of education or knowledge. *Wiki* is part of the Hawaiian word *wikiwiki*, meaning quick or fast—as in fast buck. The Web site "explains" it, as "in principle, a wiki is for whatever its users want it to be for. The format lends itself to collaboration—but collaboration that involves anyone at all, who can do anything they want to the pages." That is ultra democracy and communal spirit that not even the flower children of the 60s dreamt of. You can even forgive the error- and typo-ridden articles; grammar is just an old-fashioned convention.

Another page says that "*Wikipedia* is a collaborative project to produce a complete encyclopedia from scratch. We started in January 2001 and already have over 16,000 articles. We want to make over 100,000." That's ambition.

There is no way to verify the number, but for perspective, the 6th edition of the *Columbia Encyclopedia* has 51,682 articles, so this is quite a tall order. The definition of an article varies, so you can't go just by the number. Many of the entries of *Wikipedia* consist of a single sentence, typically a third or fourth the size of a comparable entry in the totally free *Columbia Encyclopedia*, a time-honored scholarly resource.

In *Wikipedia*, there are 1,942 "articles" which include September 11, playing the emotional card, which is totally out of place in a general encyclopedia, and include information



about lists of victims and vigil sites, personal reports—and scams. A single entry with links would have sufficed for far better organized sources to commemorate the ones who lost their lives.

There are 25 articles about the tiny island of Niue. A sign of the power of the community, the magic of collaboration, the synergy of the knowledge of Wikipedians, right? Not exactly. The site lifts each and every country profile from the CIA World Factbook (the 2000 edition, when at the CIA site the 2001 edition has been available for several months), and splits each chapter into a separate article. No wonder that no room was left for crediting the source (with a few exceptions). It's in public domain, but still should get credit. Inventive entrepreneurs, did you say complete encyclopedia from scratch? This attitude is not surprising when you look at some of the FAQs.

What surprises me is that even very respected journals and individuals publicize Wikipedia as if it was a serious project. It is a prank. Still, *Technology Review of MIT* ran an interview with Jimmy (a.k.a. Jimbo) Wales, CEO, who—according to the interview—“has spent \$150,000 of his own money developing Wikipedia.” You may believe it. The *New York Times* had a favorable article on September 20, 2001 and another on December 11, 2001. *Wired* magazine had two stories. Peter Suber, who is

## Wikipedia: Tips on contributing to Wikipedia

HomePage | Recent Changes | Preferences | Receive an article a day!  
You can edit this page right now!

### I'd like to contribute to Wikipedia. What should I do?

First, make a list of everything you know. Then, write an article for every item on that list. If, for some reason, this is not practical, here are some other tips to help you get started.

Choose a topic that is of interest to you. Find out what has been written about that topic so far. Make improvements to the articles that already exist. Fill in the gaps by creating new articles on aspects of the topic that have not been covered yet.

Visit a [Random Page]. Find a link to an article on that page that hasn't been written yet. These are the links that have [little blue question marks] after the words. Click on the question mark, and add something about that topic.

Write about something you don't know about. Use this as an excuse to research a new topic. As you learn about it, write what you are learning here on Wikipedia. This is actually a good study aid because it forces you to take notes, to organize information, and to put what you've learned into your own words.

Make a project! Take a book and write a thorough chapter-by-chapter summary. Make pages for all the characters. Or do this with your favorite fictional universe (*Star Wars*, *Middle Earth*). Pick your favorite actor and review all of their movies. Pick your favorite city and build pages for all its best attractions.

Find a big topic (like *World War II* or *Chinese history*) and create a main page, and all the subcategory pages. List all the topics that should be covered for a complete treatment. You don't have to write articles for all these topics. But if you build an outline and list everything that needs to be filled in, eventually someone will come along and start filling in!

You don't have to write to contribute. Edit pages for spelling and grammatical errors. Remove nonsense when you see it. Correct false or misleading claims. Wikify words (turn them into links). Find redundant pages like *Chicago* and *Chicago Illinois* and combine them.

Tell your friends, your enemies, random strangers on the street. Hire skywriters to write 'Wikipedia.com' across the sky. Get the word out.

*Tips on contributing to Wikipedia indicate a lack of scholarly discipline.*

### Q. Why should I contribute to Wikipedia?

A. See [why on Earth would I want to contribute to a wiki](#)

### Q. Are there any guidelines or hints?

A. See [tips on contributing to Wikipedia](#). For a discussion of unsettled or unsettling questions about Wikipedia, see [Wikipedia policy](#); you'll find discussions on naming conventions, topic creation, refactoring, point of view, etc. Finally, [be hold in updating pages!](#)

### Q. I want to contribute but I don't want to make any faux pas. What should I do?

A. Thanks for caring—but don't worry too much. If you stick around long enough, all will become clear. So dive right in! If you want, read [most common Wikipedia faux pas](#) and you should do fine.

### Q. I'm interested in a topic but not comfortable with starting a new article. What can I do?

A1. Add your topic to the [requested articles](#) page.

A2. Check out [Public Domain Resources](#) -- you may find material to copy over or use as a basis for your own article.

*Wikipedia's FAQs show its attitude toward quality information.*

the expert in free online scholarship, wrote in his newsletter that this is “the ultimate development in dynamic, interactive, collaborative scholarship.”

My, oh my, is this scholarship and ultimate? What would the naive users say and think, who will soon become contributors after reading the tips for contributors? Jimbo expects advertisers by mid-2002, and then you know who is going to be laughing all the way to the bank.

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