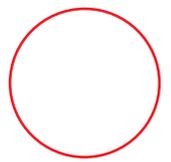


after hours: *on line*



I make at least a token effort to minimise the time I spend on line. Apart from slowing down personal productivity, there's the prospect of a whopping phone bill. But despite all my attempts at self-discipline, one of my favourite activities is still plain and simple Web surfing. It's fun jumping from one link to another as the fancy takes you. You can become mesmerised by the rich choice that the Web offers, tempted by yet one more tantalising link, then another, and maybe just one more... Never mind that much of it is rubbish – maybe that next page will be a real gem!

Terry Pinnell has fun with electric postcards, and an earth and moon viewer, as well as having a few laughs with Eddie Izzard

- www.lycos.com
- gnn.com
- www.internexus.co.uk/guide
- 193.123.77.10/guide/cool.html

Yeah, Izzard

I initially dismissed his comedy style as being definitely not to

my taste, but I changed my mind after laughing quite a lot at Eddie Izzard's live theatre performance, shown recently on TV.

I later discovered at least one Eddie Izzard Web site. As usual, it has no official status, being simply a tribute from a Dutch fan. By the time you read this I expect that there will be more such sites, so you might like to try out your fav-



Serendipity surfing

You can start surfing anywhere, or from one of the countless sites holding collections of 'cool' or recommended sites. For example, try Lycos, The Useful Internet Guide, or Global Network Navigator (GNN).

I was surprised to find at GNN that WebCrawler Select's list of the 50 most accessed links (for 1-7 April 1997) was dominated by 'chat' sites, such as Chat Now!, Chat House and Flirt Chat. The first few non-chat sites in the list were PC Hit 100 Game Downloads, at number 16, Discount Tickets at 19 and CNN US News at 20.





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

ourite searching techniques and tools with 'lizzard' as the keyword.

• www.xs4all.nl/~vonb/iz/index2.html

Houston, Texas took a photograph of the comet together with a nearby mysterious object. He claimed that it looked like Saturn and that it 'followed' Hale-Bopp for more than an hour. After some radio sensationalism, the story of the SLO (Saturn-Like Object) went to the Internet and inevitably resulted in all sorts of wild claims and speculation.

- www.halebopp.com
- www.skypub.com

Electric Postcard

In Web terms, 1995 is ancient history, so while I was at the GNN site (see first review on the preceding page) I also looked back at its 1995 Best of the Net Winners to see how well the various category winners are doing now. One that is still going strong is The Electric Postcard. From this site, using a delightfully simple interface, you can send a card by e-mail, choosing from a good choice of well-presented paintings, photographs and graphic designs. It's equally easy for the

Earth Viewer

There's some really clever programming behind this site, which gives you a simulated real-time image of the day or the night side of the earth above any location.

At its simplest, you specify a place, either by latitude and longitude or by choosing a city. Then you select altitude, cloud cover, and

whether to view a day or a night scene. The site then delivers your view.

Using more advanced facilities, images can be generated based on a map of the earth, up-to-date weather satellite imagery, or a composite image of

cloud cover superimposed on a map of the earth. Alternatively, you can get a colour composite which shows clouds, land and sea temperatures, and even ice. Providing your browser has the necessary features, you can pan around most pictures with your mouse. You can also view the moon from the earth or the sun, with similar options - apart from the clouds!

- www.fourmilab.ch/earthview/vplanet.html



recipient to collect the card.

- postcards.www.media.mit.edu/Postcards/

Comet Hale-Bopp

Did you see it? On a clear, moonless night, well away from street lights, Hale-Bopp was a fascinating sight. If you missed it, unfortunately there's a 2,300-year wait until the comet's next visit.

There are scores of Web sites covering comets in general and Hale-Bopp in particular, with terrific photographs and video clips.

Those of you who like nothing better than a good conspiracy will find lots to keep you occupied, too. For example, a controversy sprang up after one Chuck Shramek of

Feedback welcomed:

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

