

ired to the World

— by Ralph Lee Scott

Trying to locate information on the Internet can be a time consuming and frustrating experience unless you know the ropes. We all have had that experience of recalling information we found on the Internet, but not remembering where in the heck it was located. Internet addresses and URLs or Uniform Resource Locators are often written in advanced Sumerian and thus not easy to recall quickly as the patron paws at the carpet in front of the Reference Desk. We all have our little tickler files that we keep to help out in cases like this (This writer keeps important addresses on Post-it notes in his wallet!). Wouldn't it be nice if there were a fast and easy way to recall these Internet locations? This idea is not new, and several Internet computer sites now have tools for searching for information on the Net. These search engines enable the user to search for information in different ways, such as titles of home pages, files, headers, document text, and other indexes and directories. To locate a specific site or information, most search engines allow you to enter a key word or phrase, search on that word or phrase, and then receive a list of Internet computers that contain information on that topic. "Wired to the World," will explore in this issue, the most popular search engine called *Lycos*.

Lycos, offered by Carnegie Mellon University (<http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu>) will allow you to search some 3.75 million descriptors and keywords in some 767,000 documents (as of mid 1995). Developed in Spring 1994, Lycos searches the document titles, headings, links, and keywords to find the Internet locations. According to developer Michael Mauldin of the Carnegie Mellon Center for Machine Translation, "Lycos is written in Perl, but uses a C program based on CERN's libwww to fetch URLs. It uses random search, keeps its record of URLs visited in a Perl assoc list stored in DBM. It searches HTTP, FTP, and Gopher sites, ignoring TELNET, MAIL TO, and WAIS. Lycos uses a data reduction scheme to reduce the stored information about each document: Title, Headings and Subheadings, 100 most weighty words, first 20 lines of text, size in bytes and number of words."¹ In Spring 1995, Carnegie Mellon licensed Lycos to Microsoft. Under this agreement, Microsoft will further expand and develop the Lycos catalog to run on its Microsoft Network (MSN). Carnegie Mellon continues to license Lycos to other commercial information vendors such as NlightN division of the Library Corporation. Since its introduction in July 1994, Lycos has cataloged some three million documents and serviced more than nine million search requests. It is used by over 175,000 people each week and is a very popular site for

people to search on.² Lycos is also a GNN (Global Network Navigator) Best of the Net Nominee for 1995. Lycos is updated daily with new net information.

Using net software, in this case Netscape, the Lycos user types in a keyword or phrase to search. Netscape provides a form for the user to fill in for most search engines. Clicking on the search box or pressing return at the end of the word or phrase causes the software to issue a search command to Lycos.

For this "Wired to the World," column the author searched under the keyword "rufus." Lycos found 249 documents matching the word "rufus" and related words as follows: 248 sites with "rufus" in a document, one site with "rufushniztle," one site with "rufusites" and one site with the spelling "rufuss." As you can see, Lycos tries to find variant spellings of the key search words. Lycos handles a large number of users on a daily basis, but it cannot always display all of the retrieved information at once. Lycos handles this by batching the responses and sending them to the user in groups of ten documents. After you look at the first ten, you can go on to the next ten, etc. The information is supplied in a frequency order, with the documents having the most occurrences of the word sent first. (In this case the most uses of the word "rufus.")

The highest "rufus" site in the Lycos search was the "American Genealogical Database Index" with 256 links to textual information containing the word "rufus."³ The second highest "rufus" score (0.8870) was the "5-College Discordians of Saint Rufus." Brother Pope states in the excerpt that this "may not be all the members of the 5-C D.S. o'St.R., but in the absence of a formal list, these are the most likely to show up at a meeting."⁴ The third highest Lycos search retrieved referenced the "Rufus Rose Marionettes," a group of puppetters that performed in the mid 1940s in the New England states.⁵ The fourth Lycos entry was a genealogical reference to "Rufus King Hoy" who lived from 1853 to 1932 and died in Clay County, Missouri.⁶ The fifth entry was another one to the Five-College Discordian Society of Saint Rufus and provided the information that the Society is a group of Claremont College students who profess the Dicordian religion. Continuing down the Lycos list, the tenth entry details the believers of "St.Rufus, St. Bill and St.Ted In the future of the Bill and Ted movies, total Eristic Enlightenment ...⁷ Number eleven in the Lycos list (at last!) was "Rufus Edmisten, Secretary of State" and a list of other N.C. Council of State members.⁸ The final Lycos "rufus" entry I will bore you with is appropriately number 13 on the list, "Dormouse Floreat glis Downfall of Rufus Martin Oxford University Society...An unofficial society to

celebrate the purposeless and the illogical."⁹
 (Well, I said that was the last, but I cannot pass up the entry for the "Lost in Lawrence Home Page" where ... "Those of us stuck here in Lawrence, Kansas, USA have little to do but dream of other worlds....Browse around in Eques Rufus' Totus Orbis Tela for a Roman view of the Web. Be forewarned ..."¹⁰

To visit each one of the sites recovered by the Lycos search, most net browsers simply click on the URL highlighted in blue on their net web page. For example if you wanted to visit the "Lost in Lawrence Home Page," you would just click on the blue highlighted text in the Lycos entry. Of course you could enter the URL address in the "URL launch" pull down menu at the top of your web software. If you want to search the other two hundred or so "rufus" entries in Lycos give this search a try or use your own key words or phrases to try Lycos, the most popular of the net search engines. Using a web browser, you can find a wealth of information the Internet.

References

¹ Michael L. Mauldin, "Lycos Project Description," <http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu/lycos-post.01.html>

² Anne Watzman, "Microsoft Licenses the Lycos Catalog," <http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu/lycos-press-.01.html> and Anne Watzman, "NlightN Licenses the Lycos Catalog," <http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu/lycos-press-02.html>

³ <http://doit.com/tdoyle/genweb/Austin/Austin14.html>

⁴ <http://www.cs.hmc.edu/people/denis/members.html>

⁵ <http://www.leland.stanford.edu/~roseage/puppetry/puptcrit/hist.rose.html>

⁶ <http://www.xnwt.com/~mkshouse/shouse/D0000008/11124.html>

⁷ <http://www.cs.hmc.edu/people/denis/saints.html>

⁸ <http://www.nando.net/triguide/almanac/legfiles/council.html>

⁹ <http://sable.ox.ac.uk/~mert0135/dormouse.html>

¹⁰ <http://ukanaix.cc.ukans.edu/~eickwort/cv/cvhome.html>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS ...

Pamela Doyle

Education: B.A., M.L.S., East Carolina University

Position: Coordinator for Library Technical Assistance, North Carolina Community College System, Raleigh

Gillian D. Ellern

Education: B.S., West Virginia Wesleyan College; M.L.I.S., Louisiana State University

Position: Systems Librarian, Western Carolina University

Shirley T. Jones

Education: B.S., M.A.Ed., East Carolina University; Ed.D., North Carolina State University

Position: Director, Library Services, Wayne Community College

Diane D. Kester

Education: B.A., B.S., Texas Woman's University; M.A.Ed., M.L.S., Ed.S., East Carolina University; Ph.D., UNC-Chapel Hill

Position: Assistant Professor, Department of Library Studies and Educational Technology, East Carolina University

Judy LeCroy

Education: B.S., Gardner-Webb University; M.L.S., UNC-Greensboro

Position: Director of Media and Technology, Davidson County Schools

Barbara Miller Marson

Education: B.A., UNC-Chapel Hill; M.L.S., UNC-Greensboro

Position: Librarian, Fayetteville Technical Community College

Margaret Martin

Education: B.S., North Carolina State University

Position: Director of Communications, North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh

Megan Mulder

Education: B.A., Calvin College; M.A., University of Virginia; M.S.L.S., UNC-Chapel Hill

Position: Special Collections Cataloger, Wake Forest University

Julie Blume Nye

Education: B.A., Duke University; M.L.S., University of Chicago; M.B.A., UNC-Chapel Hill

Position: Project Manager, TRLN Document Delivery System, North Carolina State University Libraries

Pat Ryckman

Education: B.A., M.S.L.S., UNC-Chapel Hill

Position: New Technologies Manager, Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County

- Over 20,000 Current & Backlist Titles
- 19 Years of Service
- "Hands On" Selection
- Pre-School Through Adult
- Discounts up to 70% Off
- Now Two Adjacent Warehouses
- Sturdy Library Bindings
- 100% Fill
- Cataloging/Processing Available

MUMFORD
RELIABLE WHOLESALER SINCE 1977

North Carolina Representative – Phil May

*"Nothing like seeing
 for yourself."*

MUMFORD LIBRARY BOOKS, SOUTHEAST, INC.

7847 Bayberry Road • Jacksonville, Florida 32256

(904) 737-2649 **FAX: (904) 730-8913** **1-800-367-3927**