Web watch

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RESOURCES ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

Problem gambling is a major national political issue, with some politicians pushing for mandatory pre-commitment on poker machines, and many clubs fighting against this proposal.

The Australian government problem gambling website (http://www.problemgambling.gov.au) notes that "Australians spend nearly $12 billion a year on poker machines and three quarters of people who have a serious problem with gambling are pokie players".

Information on problem gambling is available from many sources. The site provides a resource kit (http://www.problemgambling.gov.au/resources), which includes fact sheets, research and data, and videos of gamblers, counsellors and families of gamblers.

The PDF fact sheets relate to:
• problem gambling resources;
• counselling and support services;
• online gambling and sports betting;
• pre-commitment technology.

The research reports are the Productivity Commission Inquiry Report No 50, *Gambling* (http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/gambling-2009/report) and the Report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform (http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate_committees?url=gamblingreform_ctte/interactive_online_gambling_advertising/report/report.pdf).

The government site also provides links to media reports on gambling (http://www.problemgambling.gov.au/media) and links to Gambling Research Australia's website (http://www.gamblingresearch.org.au), which contains a database of over 2,000 research reports.

The Responsible Gambling Advocacy Centre (Victoria) has information sheets (http://www.responsiblegambling.org.au/info-sheets) on general topics, and others more specific to Victoria, including:
• children and gambling;
• Castlemaine and pokies;
• facts about gambling on the Melbourne Cup.

The Australasian Gaming Council's Research eLibrary (http://www.austgamingcouncil.org.au) "is a publicly available online collection of over 3,000 research reports, papers and articles on the gambling and gaming industry in Australia and also overseas". Site membership is required to search the library. This is available free by registering onsite. A search for "pre-commitment" on 28 January 2012 returned 101 hits (including those with the word "precommitment").

Multicultural information is available from the Multicultural Problem Gambling Service for NSW (part of the Diversity Health Institute), a joint initiative of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and NSW Health. Their brochure outlines "some of the signs, symptoms and consequences of problem gambling, and describes how their services can help" (http://www.dhi.gov.au/Multicultural-Problem-Gambling-Service-for-NSW/Resources/Translations-/Translations-/default.aspx). The brochure has been translated into eight community languages (Croatian, Farsi, French, Korean, Macedonian, Spanish, Thai and Turkish).

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (Victoria) runs a Multicultural Gambler's Help Program (http://www.ceh.org.au/mghp.aspx), which "works to ensure that the needs of migrant and refugee communities are addressed in statewide responses to problem gambling".

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* All webpages cited were viewed February 2012.

The program provides:

- a DVD, *Taking the First Step Together: Gambler's Help in your Community*, with all chapters viewable in English, Italian, Khmer, Mandarin, Somali and Vietnamese;

- community profiles that can be used as the basis for intervention strategies;

- multilingual resources targeting many groups including Sudanese, Afghan, Burmese, Cambodian and Eritrean communities;

- advice on working with interpreters.

The Problem Gambling Library website from New Zealand (http://www.pgfnz.org.nz) has sections for getting help (eg an online self-assessment test), getting involved (eg joining an action group), and getting information (including a downloadable "quick reference" guide to gambling). The site also provides links to fact sheets (http://www.pgfnz.org.nz/Fact-Sheets-/0,2731,13132,00.html) covering topics including:

- gambling in New Zealand;

- young people and gambling in New Zealand;

- online gambling;

- self-exclusion;

- smoking and gambling.

GOOGLE

GOOGLE PRIVACY POLICY

In February 2012, Google introduced a new Privacy Policy and Terms of Service (http://www.google.com/policies), combining over 60 different Google privacy policies into one that covers multiple products and features, while maintaining the same general principles.

The FAQ (http://www.google.com/policies/faq) explains that if you have a Google Account and are signed in, Google may combine information you have provided from one service with information from other services. For example, Google may be able to give more accurate spelling suggestions for searches because you have typed words before, and may help it tailor search results based on interests you've expressed in Google+, Gmail or YouTube. Results for a search on "circulation" might prioritise information on blood circulation for doctors, and on book circulation for librarians. This approach could complicate matters for the medical librarian interested in blood, or the librarian with a cardiovascular condition, but it would be of great benefit to the database indexer wishing to avoid information on financial indexes.

Google provides users with choices about the ways they search and the records that are kept. No sign-in is required for Search, Maps and YouTube, and users who have signed in can edit or turn off their search history, use incognito mode on Chrome, and switch Gmail chat to "off the record".

Google Dashboard (http://www.google.com/dashboard/?hl=en) is a tool that provides a record of the Google products you use, and the data that has been collected with regards to that use. It also allows you to control your personal data settings on Google, eg removing your web history, managing Gmail settings and managing your YouTube account. You can also control the ads you see on Google using Ads Preferences manager.

The Google "Good to Know" webpage (http://www.google.com/goodtoknow) provides advice on staying safe online and managing your data. The *Google Dashboard – English* video on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPaJPxhPq_g) describes the Google Dashboard. Comments below the video suggest some resentment of the cartoon format and of the concept of interrelating all Google services.

GOOGLE BOOKS SETTLEMENT

The legal issues involved in the Google Books Settlement are entertainingly highlighted in the flow chart "GBS March Madness: Paths Forward for the Google Books Settlement" (http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/gbs-march-madness-diagram-final.pdf). It shows the numerous outcomes that may follow from the fairness hearing, and notes that there are many permutations that have not been considered.

REAL ESTATE WEBSITES

Real estate marketing has benefited enormously from the internet. It is now possible to search for property in a specific location, to refine the search by a wide range of options, to view images of the house or land, and to see the location of the property on a scalable map. Some real estate websites have been developed by organisations that also provide print advertising, while other newer ones are online-based and may target individual sellers. Some examples follow.

Realestate.com.au claims to be Australia's most popular real estate website (http://www.rs.realestate.com.au/doc/about_us/About.htm). It was established in Melbourne in 1995, has a global presence and is run by REA Group.

The basic search from the home page is by location. You can select to include surrounding suburbs, and the system will prompt you with lists of suburb, State and postcode, eg to differentiate between two places called Blaxland. There are optional dropdown lists for:
• property type (eg, house, villa or acreage);
• bedrooms (any, studio, or a number from 1 to 5);
• minimum price;
• maximum price.

Options for refining searches are extensive and include:
• minimum land area;
• minimum price;
• maximum price;
• number of bedrooms and bathrooms;
• car spaces;
• keywords;
• new or established house.

"More options" categories include:
• indoor features (eg ducted vacuum system);
• outdoor features (eg deck);
• ecofriendly (eg solar panels, water tanks and efficiency ratings).

On the search results screen there are tabs for List (the default for displaying search results), Map, Gallery, and Open for Inspection/Auction Times (organised by date). The Map option opens a Google map with a tab for Street View.

If no hits are retrieved, the system allows you to search again or to set up an alert for notification when matching properties are available.

Overall this website worked very well, although a number of links were inactive, and some announcements were out of date (eg open days that had passed).

Other real estate sites are similar. In New Zealand, Realestate.co.nz Ltd is the official online media company of the New Zealand real estate industry. It provides six websites showing listings from the main categories of real estate or providing information about property in general or specific properties:
• Realestate.co.nz (http://www.realestate.co.nz);
• Prime Commercial (http://www.primecommercial.co.nz);
• Prime Business (http://www.primebusiness.co.nz);
• nzFarms (http://www.nzfarms.co.nz);
• Unconditional (a blog) (http://www.unconditional.co.nz);

- Zoodle (information on local house prices, neighbourhood statistics etc) (http://www.zoodle.co.nz).

Refinement options are targeted for each property category. For example, Commercial Property can be refined by location and property types (eg Hotel Motel Leisure and Industrial Buildings) and by whether the property is for sale or lease. Businesses for Sale can be refined by location or business type (eg Age Care Facilities or Dairy & Superette).[1] There are 20 locations (including Pacific Islands) and a "Confidential" option which is used by a large number of sellers.

News feeds relevant to the product category are provided under each listing, and the company provides a free mobile app for house hunters (http://www.realestate.co.nz/apps).

Domain (http://www.domain.com.au) is an Australia-wide property website from Fairfax Media Network. The only search option displayed on the home page is location, with an option to browse by State. The home page also provides access to Saved Searches, Radar Search (where users can set up a profile of their requirements) and Latest Search. Users can save properties to a watch list or inspection planner. Domain.tv presents videos of interesting properties.

In New Zealand, Fairfax owns "Trade Me: Where Kiwis Buy and Sell" (http://www.trademe.co.nz/property). It costs $NZ299 to sell a property through this site.

Other real estate websites (with varying numbers of properties available) include the following:
- PropertyNow (http://www.propertynow.com.au/about-us.aspx) includes a hybrid of real estate agent sales and private sales.
- Real Estate View (http://www.realestateview.com.au) shows the BigPond logo, and appears to be run in partnership with BigPond,[2] although the About Us page does not describe the ownership beyond giving the trading name as realestateview.com.au Ltd.
- Sell No Agents (http://www.sellnoagents.com.au/real-estate.html) is an online listing/advertising service for owners who wish to sell their property, business or franchise.

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[1] "Superette" is defined as "a compact food market", "convenience store" or "mini-mart" at: http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superette.

[2] See realestateView.com.au, "RealestateVIEW.com.au Partners with BigPond and Trading Post" (Media Release, 26 October 2010), http://www.realestateview.com.au/news/realestateview-com-au-partners-with-bigpond-and-trading-post: "Australia's third largest property portal http://www.realestateVIEW.com.au will soon be appearing on the *Trading Post* and BigPond websites in a move that is set to deliver more value to site users and extend the audience reach of http://www.realestateVIEW.com.au."