November 2003

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Recommended Citation

Spencer, Roxanne Myers (2003) "Wandering the Web -- Selected Annotated Web Bibliography of Science Fiction and Fantasy Sites," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 15: Iss. 5, Article 36.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4184>

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Wandering the Web — Selected Annotated Web Bibliography of Science Fiction and Fantasy Sites

by **Roxanne Myers Spencer** (Educational Resources Center Coordinator, Western Kentucky University)

Column Editor: **Jack Montgomery** (Western Kentucky University) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>

Column Editor's Note: In conjunction with her presentation to the *Charleston Conference* this fall, **Ms. Spencer** decided to begin researching online science fiction and fantasy Websites. This dedicated, fan-driven genre and sub genre attracts among the most Web-literate citizens worldwide. Here are but a few stars among many of the science fiction-fantasy constellation. It is hoped that this bibliography will be of value to those who may not be familiar with the genre and wish to instruct or make recommendations for patrons. **Ms. Spencer** has a lifetime interest in the literature of science fiction and is a former editor for *Scholastic Publishers*. She is also a published author and poet. — **JM**

Random Sites for Sci-Fi Fans

1) **The Ultimate Science Fiction Web Guide** — <http://www.magicdragon.com/UlimateSF/SF-Index.html>

Authors, aliens, movies, games, and genres—these are a few of the almost 6,000 links provided by this science fiction-fantasy megasite. This site helpfully annotates the categories of links, such as describing genres by the link “If you like this then you’ll like that,” which features books by category, genre, or as it is referred to by the editor, “sub genre category.” Helpful hints include jogging viewers’ memories by book cover design. More than twenty definitions of science fiction are listed, which should make even the most persnickety librarian or English teacher happy. This Website is an excellent resource for the genre, although a drawback, common to many such megasites, is that site updates are infrequent and quickly out-of-date.

2) **Famous Science Fiction/Fantasy Authors** — http://www.adherents.com/adh_sf.html

This is an interesting Website devoted to listing famous and influential science fiction/fantasy writers, with brief mentions of their most popular works. The authors of the Website are clear in stating that literary merit is a secondary consideration after fame and influence. An interesting conceit of the list is that the author’s religious affiliations are noted in the annotated tables. The parent site, <http://www.adherents.com>, claims to be “an Internet initiative and is not affiliated with any religious, political, educational, or commercial organization. **Adherents.com** is the second most frequently visited general religion site on the Internet.” A color code clues the viewer in to titles that have won prestigious book awards for the genre, such as the **Hugo**, **Nebula**, **Locus**, or **World Fantasy Awards**. A link to science fiction/fantasy titles with religious references makes for interesting book club discussions, particularly for church youth groups seeking innovative topics to lure teen readers. This Website presents a unique

approach with a well-researched list of popular science fiction-fantasy authors and their best-known titles.

3) **Science Fiction and Fantasy World** — <http://www.sffworld.com/>

Searching this site could become a secondary occupation: **Science Fiction and Fantasy World** boasts “more than 10,000 pages of SF and Fantasy related content.” In addition to the usual discussions, author profiles, and book reviews of the genre, the site features books synopses, related poetry, interviews, and an art gallery. Viewers can vote on their favorite titles, and a monthly fantasy e-zine is available by email subscription to site members. The Website editors keep up with science fiction-fantasy genre news and a comprehensive backfile of news items should keep die-hard fans in the know on their favorite authors. The art gallery is a plus for many fans, and includes very brief descriptions of the works on display. An About/Staff page provides brief bios of the international editors of this comprehensive site. Minimal descriptions of each section’s contents may make navigation of this site a little frustrating for newcomers to these pages.

4) **Baen Books** — <http://www.baen.com>

To meet the needs of a highly cyber-literate audience, **Baen Books**, publisher of such well-known science fiction-fantasy writers as **Lois McMaster Bujold** and **Piers Anthony**, has created a Website with “added value” (which so many organizations scrambled to provide in the early days of commercial Websites). The WebBoard offers viewers a chance to discuss dozens of topics from manuscript postings for consideration to a forum for “Blazes”: Where we put hot heads to thrash out their differences,” to more traditional discussions of favorite authors, plots, and characters. The publisher, **Jim Baen**, weighs in on the WebBoard, too. A sure draw is the **Baen Free Library**, which provides, free, “with no strings attached” full titles for download in a variety of formats. And these titles are not straight out of the slush pile, either. Consider **Mercedes Lackey’s Fiddler Fair** or **Larry Niven’s Fallen Angels**. All in all, science fiction-fantasy fans will find this a useful and entertaining site.

5) **SFF Net** — <http://www.sff.net>

SFF Net has the distinction of being the official home of the **Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America**, the **Horror Writers Association**, and the **World Fantasy Convention**. Ardent fans will appreciate the thousands of author pages and several membership levels to the site for fans, professionals, and commercial vendors. The Personal Domain membership includes the use of virtual domains and unlimited email aliases. Among the discussion topics are writing, writing workshops, self-publication, and suggested books for

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nologies and standards should be utilized to address these issues. They recommended that **NISO’s** role would be to identify potential solutions and provide guidelines for how to effectively implement them for metasearching. The group intends to conduct a survey of the existing authentication and authorization systems and map those to various metasearching scenarios.

The **Statistics** group discussed how existing statistics might need to be handled differently when generated by metasearch related activities as what additional measures might be needed. The

Progress on the Metasearch Initiative can be followed at: <http://www.niso.org/committees/MetaSearch-info.html> [Metasearching Strategy Workshop]

group intends to link up with the leading statistics projects, e.g. **NISO’s Z39.7** revision, **COUNTER**, **ICOLC**, and **RLG Emetrics** to further explore possible approaches.

The **Searching Options** group discussed the existing search protocol standards and the potential for developing metasearch-specific profiles. Protocol candidates under consideration were **Z39.50**, the new XML-based **Z39.50** next generation (**ZING**) experiments, and the **W3C XML Query Language**.

The **Metasearch Identification System** group discussed how a metasearch system and the back-end system could identify themselves to each other so that system impacts and performance could be better managed. Several recommendations were made, such as a separate IP or URL address for a back-end system for metasearching and a standard identification parameter for the metasearch system that is transmitted to the back-end system.

The **Resource Description** group explored the possibility of a standardized collection description format and set of data elements that could be used by metasearch systems to direct users to the most appropriate resources for any particular search.

The **Result Sets Management** group discussed what core set of metadata would be needed to describe and manipulate a metasearch results set from multiple sources. They also considered how more than this core set could be delivered where information providers have additional value-added data.

The **Metasearch Initiatives** planning group is now reviewing the workshop recommendations, identifying those where **NISO** should take further action, and establishing priorities. Watch this space and the **NISO Website** (www.niso.org) for more information. This is work that will change the nature of our business and help libraries establish themselves as an authoritative and efficient information resource in this ubiquitous Information Age.

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signed, easily navigated site with much to offer the fan of these genres.

6) The SF Site — <http://www.sfsite.com/home.htm>

Since July 1997, the SF Site editors have posted book reviews, editorials, interviews, excerpts, reading lists, updated twice monthly. Links to fan tribute sites, genre conventions, related media events, and print and online publications, are among the other easily navigated offerings on this well-designed site. Author photos and interviews with thumbnail reviews make picking and choosing what to read first a delightful chore. Home to such notable author Websites as **Charles De Lint**, **Harlan Ellison**, and **Stephen King**, newcomers to the site will know they are truly in the fantastic kingdom, where all inhabitants hold forth in the royal court of the science fiction/fantasy genre.

7) SciFi.com — <http://www.scifi.com/>

The Website for the cable TV station the SciFi Channel is more than a sophisticated cyber program guide. The *Science Fiction Weekly* newsmagazine, geared toward young adults, offers reviews of new releases and classics; it boasts a genre-related site of the week, games, and other "cool stuff," which feature reviews of the latest deadly electronic toy. *SciFi Wire* reports the latest goings-on in the media and the bulletin board (BBoard) offers topics of discussion from movies to books to authors to "Left Field" topics such as "Gender and SciFi," and "Culture and SciFi." Oh, and if you aren't hip to the latest *Stargate* technology or *Farscape* escapades, let the complete series' episode guides and introductions keep you on the cutting edge.

Selected Science Fiction/Fantasy Bibliography sites

8) The Science Fiction and Fantasy Book List Site — <http://www.sfboklist.co.uk/>

This site is a simply designed but large bibliography of more than 4,000 science fiction and fantasy authors and titles. The database has links to existing official and fan sites for favorite authors and is updated monthly. Simple alphabetic link arrangement makes the site easy to use.

9) Fantastic Fiction — <http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/>

The database lists more than 3,000 science fiction, fantasy, and horror

writers. The links include literary agents, professional organizations, and a list of genre publishers. Overall, a well-designed, easily navigated site with much to offer the fan of these genres.

authors and titles. Search functions are slightly more sophisticated than the **Science Fiction and Fantasy Book List Site** above. Users can search titles or authors alphabetically or by search box. Price comparisons, cover art, extexts, and brief author bios make this a worthwhile site.

10) Science Fiction and Fantasy for Children: An Annotated Bibliography for Educators — <http://libnt1.lib.uoguelph.ca/SFBib/index.htm>

Created by **Linda Day** at the **University of Guelph**, Canada, this is a useful, if somewhat limited, tool for educators and young readers of the genres. The Search function is sophisticated in that the Help function provides users with good search tools. The flaw in this well-annotated collection is that there is no way to view the contents of the database other than using the Search function—a not uncommon flaw in some Internet search technology.

Selected Children's Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors Websites

11) Redwall Abbey: The Official Website of British Author Brian Jacques — <http://www.redwall.org/dave/news.php>

This deliciously illustrated Website contains an encyclopedia of *Redwall*, crossword puzzles, an online gift shop, interviews with the author, and a gallery of sumptuous illustrations from the novels. The excellent navigation will make this site a quick Favorites link for fans and newcomers alike.

12) The Book on Jane Yolen — <http://www.janeyolen.com/>

Renowned and beloved, **Jane Yolen** is to fantasy literature for children what **A.A. Milne** is to honey pots and bears. **Yolen's** site is a treasure trove of information for teachers, would be writers, and fans of her many books. After twenty-five years of classroom visits, **Yolen** has retired from her role as visiting author, but she is still doing the convention and lecture circuit in the U.S. and abroad. Popular titles include *Sword of the Rightful King*, *A Sending of Dragons*, and the *Tartan Magic Book* series.

13) Lois Lowry — <http://www.loislowry.com/index.html>

The author of the ever-popular futuristic novels *The Giver*, and *Gathering Blue*, is also known for the zany *Anastasia* series, starring **Anastasia Krupnik**, whom we meet at the tender age of ten (and who, in the inimitable way of fiction, has, since 1979, only aged three years!), and **Caroline** and **J.P. Tate**, siblings who bicker their way from New York City to Iowa and right into readers' hearts.

WEBWORTHY

Column Editor: **Pamela M. Rose, M.L.S.** (Web Services & Library Promotion Coordinator, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo) <pmrose@buffalo.edu> wings.buffalo.edu/~pmrose

Webworthy has reviewed 306 Websites to date! Websites selected for broad appeal, depth of information, functionality and ease of access. Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any sites that are not accessible. Comments and suggestions welcome to Pamela M. Rose, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002; 716-829-3900 x129; <pmrose@buffalo.edu>. Unless otherwise noted in square brackets following the description, Internet addresses were published in Science's NetWatch column. — PR

Anatomy

"It is possible to learn the nature of such an epiphysis whenever part of ... any young animal is put on the dinner table." So **Vesalius** admonishes his readers to be alert to the study of anatomy. Despite the fact that most health sciences students have seen or studied his famous anatomical drawings, whether in books or as art, first-hand knowledge of **Vesalius'** writings in "hideously difficult" Latin has been restricted to a tiny circle of experts until now. **De Humani Corporis Fabrica**, volume 1, has now been translated into English, augmented, and made available for all to enjoy. Professors **Daniel Garrison** and **Malcolm Hast** of **Northwestern University** have labored for ten

years to produce this valuable tool. The other six volumes will be available over the next several years. — <http://vesalius.northwestern.edu/>

Confidentiality

Need to know how to protect your confidential patient data? Tap into guidelines, recommendations and other information on safeguarding confidential health and other electronic data at the American Statistical Association's Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security Website. In addition to locating specific guidelines for government agencies, there is also a section on statistical tricks for ensuring anonymity, such as inserting noise into measurements to blur their origin. — <http://www.amstat.org/comm/cmtpec/>

History of Medicine

"As it is no easy matter to root out prejudices, ... it became requisite to exhibit a full and impartial view of what had hitherto been published..." So notes **James Lind** in his 1753 work *Treatise of the Scurvy*. Although **Lind** is best noted for establishing lemons and oranges as remedies for scurvy, his astute recognition of the need for fair tests that weigh all pertinent evidence and account for chance and bias are celebrated on **The James Lind Library** created by the **Library and Information Services Department of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh**. In addition to images of each page of **Lind's** landmark

treatise, readers can explore the history of fair tests through book excerpts, papers, biographies, bibliographies, and expert commentary. — <http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/>

Reference

Everything you always wanted to know (and then some!) about everything — or so it may appear! **Wikipedia** is an ambitious "people's encyclopedia" project with content in over forty languages, developed by everyone for everyone. Anyone can contribute an article on any topic to the Website, and anyone else can edit any page. Talk about peer review — easily bruised egos need not apply! With over 160,000 articles already available, the site is growing by more than 300 articles per day with no signs of slowing down. There is no formal executive committee overseeing the project; just a server, someone who pays the bills, and a structure in place for the peoples of the world to contribute their own individual knowledge in their own language, expert or not. Much of the strength of this resource comes from the open structure, but alas so does much of its weakness. A number of features were disabled because use slowed the server down to a crawl. *Caveat emptor!* It is a fascinating browse, nonetheless, and has great potential. — <http://www.wikipedia.com>