



The Invisible Web

What is the Invisible Web?

The Invisible Web can be defined as Web pages search engines are designed not to find. Experts estimate that the Invisible Web is anything from two to fifty times larger than the visible Web. Components of the Invisible Web include, but are not limited to, phone numbers, E-Mail addresses, dictionaries and other reference books, the BBC news archive, the FAA Flight Tracker, product catalogs, contents of library catalogs, streaming media, Java Script, and most importantly the contents of Web based databases such as ERIC or Medline.

The Invisible Web contains some of the most authoritative information on the Internet. This information is almost always free. The problem is that search engines can't find it.

Examples of Invisible Web Databases

Library of Congress Catalog

<http://catalog.loc.gov/>

Medline

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi>

ERIC

<http://askeric.org/Eric/>

How do I find information on the Invisible Web?

Mastering all elements of the Invisible Web would be a 60-hour per week job. The Invisible Web grows and changes as quickly as the Visible Web. We can all be thankful though, that some excellent guides to the Invisible Web exist.

Complete Planet

www.completeplanet.com

Well thought out guide to valuable information. Contains very useful leads to academic sites.

Direct Search

<http://www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm>

Direct Search includes a large number of sites chiefly covering academic information. A librarian compiles direct Search, so it is well organized. This site will never win any prizes for excellence of design; nevertheless, it is quite useful.

Invisible Web Directory

<http://www.invisible-web.net/>

A selective directory of more than 1,000 specialized databases. This site has good descriptions and live links to the databases.

News Center

<http://www.freepint.com/gary/newscenter.htm>

An amazing set of links to the websites and hence current news stories from the electronic and print media from around the world.

Where can I find more information about the Invisible Web?

University of California at Berkley Teaching Library

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/InvisibleWeb.html>

This Website does an excellent job of explaining why search engines cannot find everything on the Web, suggests strategies for exploiting the useful content of the invisible Web, and evaluates various academic Invisible Web directories. It includes a link to site that evaluates popular sites.

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invisible web.doc jan 2003