

best of the web

Back in graduate school, I discovered something called the World Wide Web. It was mostly text-based then, and I connected via a 2400-baud modem on an old Mac Classic. I used it to search libraries for books, articles and collections related to my frighteningly boring thesis topic — the diplomatic and ideological aims of the American export of literature to Eastern Europe during the Cold War. If the research wouldn't put you to sleep, the wait for information on the creeping modem would.

Fast-forward a decade: The Web is nearly a necessity, broadband has quickened the connections and even a cursory browsing shows that it has become little more than a glorified strip mall.

Given the massive conglomeration in the entertainment/news industry, is there anything left worth viewing? The answer is yes, and *Golfdom* is proud to share a few of our favorites with you.

News: A wonderful news site is the World Press Review (worldpress.org), which offers in-depth stories from various news sources around the globe. The site always mentions any political leanings of a publication as a service to the discerning reader. Those more interested in the off-beat news stories will want to check Jim Romenesko's Obscure Store (obscurestore.com) for a daily dose of wackiness and human foibles.

Sports: Given that the Fall Classic is but a month away, there are two must-see sites for any baseball fan. The first, Baseball



ARTVILLE

WITH THE WEB BECOMING MORE LIKE AN ELECTRONIC STRIP MALL, IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO LOOK AT? YES **BY MARK LUCE**

Reference (baseball-reference.com), contains more statistics than you could shake a stick at. Easy to use and quick to load, it will solve debates about players, awards or World Series outcomes with a click. The other, Jim Furtado's Baseball Newstand (baseballnewstand.com), culls specific links to Major League teams and regional columnists on one page — a one-stop shop for news and views from anywhere.

Entertainment: Fans of hard-boiled stories and film can enjoy William Denton's wonderful, "Twists, Slugs and Roscoes" (miskatonic.org/slang.html), a glossary of alley-wise slang used by authors like Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain and Dashell Hammett. Or they can try Tim Dirks' brief history of *film noir* (filmsite.org/filmnoir.html). Music and film lovers should check out, respectively, the All Music Guide (allmusic.com) and All Movies Guide (allmovies.com), which offer overviews and criticism on tens of thousands of records and films.

Reference: No matter what you need, The RefDesk (refdesk.com) is stuffed with useful resources and is a must bookmark when you need to find something fast. In the same vein, the Internet Public Library (ipl.org) offers a staggering number of links on subjects from law to leisure.

Education: Michael Duffy's First World War (firstworldwar.com) examines the Great War and offers articles, images, timelines and biographies. The site How Stuff Works (howstuffworks.com) gives primers on everything from interest rates to rocket engines.

Diversions: The Onion (theonion.com) offers hilarious fake news stories and surprisingly good interviews of real cultural figures.

Happy surfin'.

Mark Luce, who still connects to the Web with a dial-up connection, is a free-lance writer based in Lawrence, Kan.

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