

already checked into it. Wondering about that odd ingredient in a witbier? A dozen computer beer lovers have the answer.

There is a downside. Screens full of useless chit-chat can go by before something interesting shows up. And time will be spent sifting through the information.

Second, these are opinions. Think about sitting around a bar, after a few pints, and the beer chat that ensues. Not all that talk could stand the light of day. Some of the information may simply not be true.

However, there are some great minds (and tongues) on the net, including some well-known brewers, who have a lot to say that is entertaining and educational.

Third, it's easy to offend. Without the benefits of body language or voice inflection, typed comments lack emotional context and one person's witticism can be another person's off-putting remark.

The tricky part is figuring out how to access the computers and the people. Imagine trying to mail a letter or ship a package without national services. No USPO, Fed Ex, UPS, or Consolidated Freight to figure out all the transportation routes.

Tapping the net means figuring out step by step what it takes to get on the wire and move information back and forth. And each connection may have its own different rules and regulations; read: different software.

The key ingredients are people and books. Talking with people and reading are the first steps. Internet books abound and more than one phone call is required to get settled into tapping the net. The newest is *The Mac Internet Tour Guide* (Ventana Press, Chapel Hill, NC). Another is the *Internet Starter Kit* (Hayden Books, Indianapolis, IN). *Zen and the Art of Internet* (Simon & Schuster, New York, NY) by Brendan Kehoe is heavily

recommended.

Getting in can require some imagination. There are tens of thousands of on-line gateways to the net and more springing up every day.

Cart and horse time, however. Selecting the gateway depends on what services are interesting, but not being on the net means not knowing what services are to be had. The net is filled with such dilemmas.

The basic relationship with the commercial services is quite simple. Generally, they provide free software for launching into the service. Monthly charges, plus hourly connect fees that vary depending on the forums used, are the financial commitments.

The largest as far as number of participants, America Online, has its own Beer & Homebrewing Forum in the Wine & Dine Online. Run by Craig Goldwyn of Chicago, Wine & Dine Online is obviously more focused on wines and restaurants. However, the beer forum has lively debates on homebrewing, concise reviews of brewpubs by state, and intense exchanges about other beer topics (such as beer jokes). It also has *All About Beer Magazine's* unpublished news items and its updated calendar.

CompuServe has an extremely active group of beer lovers, with sections on beer and breweries, traveling for beer, technical homebrew, styles, recipes, and much more. Each section leader stays on top of his/her area, paying close attention to material. The Association of Brewers founded this forum and maintains an active presence on it.

Prodigy and Genie have active beer and homebrewing forums, although the fifth major service, Delphi, doesn't. Alone of all the big services, Delphi does offer full Internet capabilities.

Beyond these are dozens of small gateways to the net.

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QUICK REFERENCE TO BEER ON THE NET

USENET

- alt.beer
A free-wheeling ramble through the world of beer.
- alt.hangover
Conversations and tales of woe
- alt.beer.like-molson-eh
An interesting discussion of the Canadian giant with fascinating price comparisons.
- alt.zima
An anarchist look at one of the oddest of alcohol beverages, soon to be a cult product.
- francom.biere_vins
A forum, in French, discussing all aspects of beer and wine.
- rec.crafts.brewing
Fast talk on making beer at home.
- rec.food.drink.beer
High on good information, low on chatty talk.

WORLD WIDE WEB

- Austrian Beer Guide
<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/keith/austrianbeer.html>
A tour of a little-discussed beer mecca.
- Beer in Cyberspace
<http://karikukko.pc.helsinki.fi/beerinfo.html>
The beer scene in Finland and beyond (available in Finnish and English).
- Biere
<http://www.cma.fr/bieres/bieres.html>
From France some beer critiques. Difficult to get into.
- The Cityscape Pub Guide
<http://www.cityscape.co.uk:81/bar/pubguide.html>
An interactive guide to pubs in Cambridge, England.
- Dan's Beer Page
<http://www.eff.org/dan/beer.html>
Information pertaining to the Usenet alt.beer news group.
- Eric's Beer Page
<http://pekkel.uthscsa.edu/beer.html>
Information about brewing, and the Texas beer scene.
- The Mead Brewer's Page
<http://www.atd.ucar.edu/rdp/gfc/mead/mead.html>
About brewing mead.
- Spencer's Beer Page
<http://guraldi.itn.med.umich.edu:80/Beer/index.html>
About homebrewing.
- The Virtual Pub
<http://lager.geo.brown.edu:8080/virtual-pub/index.html>
Access beer related images and documents, plus participate in on-line beer tastings.

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MAILING LISTS (E-MAIL)

■ Cider Digest
cider-request@x.org
Information on beer's first cousin and an American standard

■ Home Brew Digest
homebrew-request@hpfcmr.hp.com
A daily update with postings of homebrewers about issues relating to home beer making.

■ JudgeNet
Judge-request@synchro.com
Publishes material useful for becoming a beer judge.

■ Lambic Digest
Lambicrequest@longs.lance.colostate.edu
An interesting collection of material on a very obscure beer style.

■ LiBeerty—The Libertarian Beer Digest
liberty-request@synchro.com
Topics of interest to libertarian brewers and beer lovers, to counter the rising tide of neo-Prohibitionism.

■ Mead Lovers
mead-lovers-request@eklektix.com
For the lovers of mead, a collection of material.

■ New England Beer Club
beer-request@rsi.com
Promotion of homebrewing and beer appreciation in New England, but not for technical material on homebrewing.

■ TOBREW
zen@hophead.north.net
A forum for discussion of beers available in Toronto and southern Ontario.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

■ America Online
800-827-6364
Beer & Brewing in Wine & Dine Online
Has forums on homebrewing, beer tasting notes by country, pub reviews by country and state, and others.

■ CompuServe
800-848-8199
Baccus Wine Forum in Food & Wine in Lifestyles
Has forums on homebrewing, beer and breweries, recipes, and books and publications.

■ eWorld
800-776-2333
Not quite up and running yet, Apple's new commercial on-line service will feature a beer section run by All About Beer Magazine's own Rob Haiber.

■ Genie
800-638-9636
GUZL Homebrew Club, Beer & Wine Roundtable
■ Prodigy
800-776-3449
Beer & Home Brewing Bulletin Board

FTP

■ Basics of Brewing
ftp://ee.uwm.edu/bb.html
*A collection of brewing information. Hard to get to, often with *nothing* as a result.*

■ Homebrew Newsletter Listing
ftp://raj2.tn.cornell.edu/pub/newsletters/newsletter.list
A list of many of the homebrewing newsletter. Doesn't take anonymous ftp.

■ Rec.crafts.brewing and rec.food.drink.beer archive
ftp://sierra.stanford.edu/pub/homebrew/

Also includes several FAQs, the Cats Meow recipe collection, and pictures of beer labels.

■ Alt.beer Archive
ftp://cwru.edu/pub/alt.beer

■ Lambic FAQ
netlib@longs.lance.colostate.edu
Request index, index for lambic or date from lambic

BULLETIN BOARD SERVICE

■ Home Brew University BBS Network (modem)
708-705-7263 via Illinois or 713-923-6418 via Texas.

■ FidoNet (BBS)
Zymurgy 703-525-3715
Unrelated to magazine of same name. Available on many BBS's (e.g. No Tarmac Brewing BB 703-525-3715)

■ Fido (BBS)
fido7.ru.beer:
Beer in the forum Soviet Union. Discussions take place in Russian

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Simon & Schuster Pocket Guide to Beer

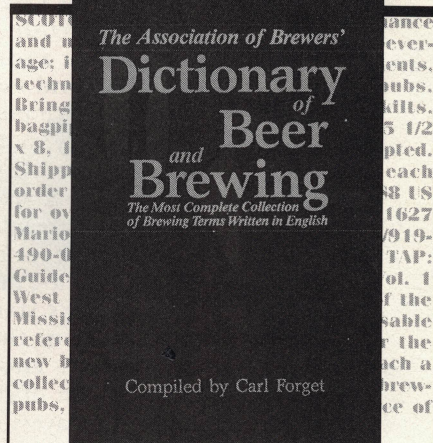
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