

Finding DB2 information using the Internet

The data processing world is increasingly becoming an on-line world. This phenomenon is being driven by the Internet. Let's examine some of the best places to look for DB2 information on the Internet.

When discussing the Internet, most people limit themselves to the World Wide Web. However, there are many components that make up the Internet. For the purpose of this article, I will discuss the three primary components most useful to DB2 professionals – the World Wide Web, mailing lists, and Usenet Newsgroups.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The World Wide Web (WWW) uses a graphical interface and hypertext protocol to display information in a point-and-click environment. Using a Web browser, users can navigate through the Internet, accessing Web pages and FTP and gopher sites.

There are many Web pages providing useful DB2 information. Foremost, of course, is IBM's DB2 Family Web page at <http://www.software.ibm.com/data/db2>. From this page, you will be able to access DB2 version and release information, technical information, DB2 manuals on-line, and add-on product information. Another useful IBM site is the redbook site. IBM's International Technical Support Organization (ITSO) publishes many books on technical topics. The IBM ITSO Redbook site can be accessed at <http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/redbooks>. It provides a searchable on-line catalogue and the ability to order redbooks directly from IBM over the Web.

Three other Web sites that you should visit and bookmark are Ron Raberd's DB2 reference site, Eric Loriaux's MVS site, and the JED-SP S/390 site. Ron Raberd's DB2 reference page can be reached at <http://www.webcom.com/~raberdb2info.html>. Eric Loriaux's MVS site can be reached at <http://www.ping.be/~ping1475>. The System/390 home page is at <http://www.jedsp.com/s390>.

Many DB2 experts and consultants have their own Web sites that contain useful tips, tricks, and techniques, as well as their speaking schedules and copies of their presentations. One of the best of these sites is Richard Yevich's RYC Inc site, which can be reached at <http://www.ryci.com>. Another useful page is the database tips site that can be reached at <http://www.platinum.com/dbtips>. It contains useful DB2 tips, tricks, and guidelines.

Several of the DB2 user groups also have Web sites. These sites contain many useful DB2 resources, such as meeting schedules, newsletters, DB2 tips, and presentations. The International DB2 User Group (IDUG) Web site is one that every DB2 professional should visit regularly. It contains information on forthcoming conferences, as well as an on-line version of its DB2-related magazine, *IDUG Solutions Journal*. The IDUG Web site can be reached at <http://www.idug.org>.

Finally, most of the third-party DB2 tool vendors also have Web sites that contain information on DB2 and their product offerings.

MAILING LISTS

Mailing lists are a sort of community bulletin board. You can think of mailing lists as equivalent to a mass mailing. There are around 40,000 mailing lists available on the Internet, and they operate using a list server. A list server is a program that automates the mailing list subscription requests and messages. The two most common list servers are Listserv and Majordomo. Listserv is also a common synonym for a mailing list, but it is actually the name of a particular list server program.

If you subscribe to a mailing list, information is sent directly to your e-mail in-box. After subscribing, articles will begin to arrive in your e-mail box.

To subscribe to a mailing list, simply send an e-mail to the appropriate subscription address requesting a subscription. The DB2 mailing list can be subscribed to by sending a message to the subscription address, LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU. The message should read as follows:

SUBSCRIBE DB2-L

After issuing the preceding command, the list server will send you a message asking you to confirm the subscription. When you do so, information will quickly begin flowing into your e-mail box (perhaps at a much faster rate than you can reasonably digest). Literally hundreds of messages may be sent to you every week. To sign off from the newsgroup, send the following message to the same subscription address:

```
SIGNOFF DB2-L
```

In addition to a subscription address, mailing lists also have a posting address. This is the address to which mailing list posts must be sent. You should never send subscription requests to the list's posting address, nor send post to the subscription address.

The posting address for the DB2-L mailing list is DB2-L@AMERICAN.EDU. When a message is sent to this address, it will automatically be forwarded to everyone currently subscribing to the list.

You may also want to consider digesting your DB2 mailing list e-mails. A digest is an accumulation of the day's messages sent as one big e-mail. The benefit of digesting is that instead of receiving multiple daily messages from a mailing list, only one daily digest is sent. Because the DB2 list is usually quite active, you may receive dozens of e-mails daily if you do not choose the digest option.

To request digesting, simply send an e-mail to the subscription address. The digest request must be made after you have successfully subscribed to the mailing list.

For the DB2 mailing list, send the following message to the subscription address, LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU:

```
SET DB2-L DIGEST
```

The drawbacks to digests are that threads can be hard to follow, it is more difficult to respond to messages, and they can become quite large.

Finally, contributions sent to the DB2 mailing list are automatically

archived. The archive can be searched to find e-mails that were posted to the mailing list in the past. You can get a list of the available archive files by sending the following command to LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU:

```
INDEX DB2-L
```

The files returned can be ordered using the following command:

```
GET DB2-L LOGxxxx
```

USENET NEWSGROUPS

Another very fertile source of information on the Internet is found in various Usenet Newsgroups. Usenet, an abbreviation for User Network, is a large collection of discussion groups called newsgroups. Each newsgroup is a collection of articles pertaining to a single pre-determined topic. Newsgroup names usually reflect their focus. For

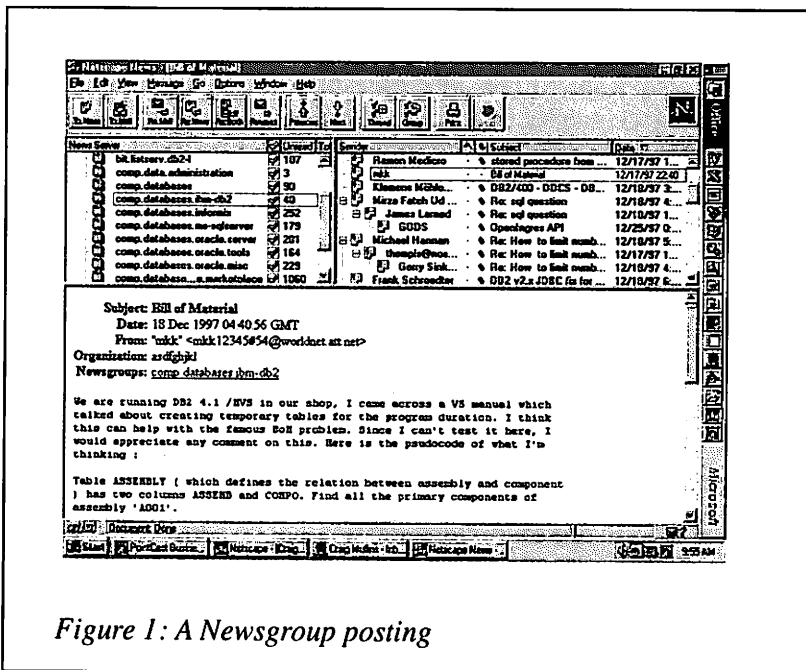


Figure 1: A Newsgroup posting

Newsgroup name	Description
comp.client-server	Information on client/server technology
comp.compression.research	Research on data compression techniques
comp.databases	Issues regarding databases and data management
comp.databases.ibm-db2	Information on IBM's DB2 family of products
comp.databases.informix	Information on the Informix DBMS
comp.databases.ingres	Information on the CA-Ingres DBMS
comp.databases.object	Information on object-oriented database systems
comp.databases.oracle.server	Information on the Oracle DBMS
comp.databases.sybase	Information on the Sybase DBMS
comp.databases.theory	Discussions on database technology and theory
comp.edu	Computer science education
comp.infosystems	General discussion of information systems
comp.misc	General computer-related topics
comp.os.os2.announce	OS/2 related announcements
comp.os.os2.apps	Information on OS/2 applications
comp.unix.admin	Unix administration discussions
comp.unix.aix	Information on IBM AIX
comp.unix.questions	Question and answer forum for Unix novices
comp.unix.solaris	Information pertaining to Sun Solaris
bit.listserv.aix-1	Information pertaining to AIX
bit.listserv.appc-1	Information pertaining to APPC
bit.listserv.cics-1	Information pertaining to CICS
bit.listserv.db2-1	Information pertaining to DB2
bit.listserv.ibm-main	IBM mainframe newsgroup
bit.listserv.os2-1	Information pertaining to OS/2
bit.listserv.power-1	Information pertaining to RS/6000s
bit.listserv.sqlinfo	Information pertaining to SQL/DS (DB2 for VSE & VM)

Figure 2: Useful Usenet Newsgroups

example, `comp.databases.ibm-db2` contains discussions about the DB2 family of products.

Using most Web browsers or specialized news reader software, any Internet user can access a newsgroup and read the information it contains. Refer to Figure 1 for an example of a newsgroup posting to `comp.databases.ibm-db2`.

There are newsgroups available to satisfy just about every interest, particularly DB2. There are three primary newsgroups that DB2 users can access for DB2 news and information:

- `comp.databases`
- `bit.listserv.db2-1`
- `comp.databases.ibm-db2`.

Generic database information can be found on the `comp.databases` newsgroup. Some DB2 users post questions, comments, and information to this newsgroup because, for a long time, there was no newsgroup devoted to DB2. The only other option was to use the DB2 mailing list.

The `bit.listserv.db2-1` newsgroup is very active with DB2 discussions and information. However, this newsgroup is a copy of the DB2 mailing list. If you subscribe to the mailing list, the information in this newsgroup will not be new.

The third, and newest, newsgroup is `comp.databases.ibm-db2`. This was instituted in early 1995 to offload the DB2 traffic from the `comp.databases` newsgroup and to provide a dedicated newsgroup for DB2 users. However, the postings to this newsgroup predominantly pertain to the DB2 Universal Database (as opposed to DB2 for OS/390). Other Usenet Newsgroups that may be of interest to DB2 users are listed in Figure 2.

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