

# Follow-up

SPRING 2000



*What begins with “e” and helps you travel and do business around the world?*

## It's e-commerce



Increasingly, we search for things and services we need on the web—what may have started with books and general information now includes a global search for resource people to meet our increasingly international needs as businesses. In addition, we may use the web as a resource for a paper we need to write or a puzzle we need to solve. How my friends in the National Puzzlers League managed without the Net is a mystery to me, although even I have several volumes of “real” resource materials.

[www.janedurant.com](http://www.janedurant.com), like others receives requests from all corners of the globe, a large number of those request being from students hoping to get help (or to get off lightly) with their school assignments. In talking with other web site owners, we agree that one of the more disappointing parts of responding

to students seems to be their general inability to say thank you or give any feedback at all.

After several of these resounding silences, I have adopted a new strategy. Rather than giving direct answers and doing their presentations for them, I prefer to “teach them to fish” by suggesting books and other resource materials that they might find useful—but will need to locate. At least it is an attempt to encourage them to do some token research!

On the other hand, clients do find resource people, and I have been fortunate to be awarded three substantial pieces of business over the past few months—two in Canada and one in China—as a result of responding to an enquiry from the Net. My work in China has resulted in my being invited to

return, and I feel most privileged in this experience.

This was my first trip to the People's Republic of China, armed with about 20 words of Mandarin and a feeling of excitement to be part of their efforts to provide organizational development initiatives to their people. My friend Pam and I had an excellent time, me working with keen and interested people and Pam pioneering her way around Wuxi on her own with little difficulty and a lot of friendly assistance from the local people. ni hao!

Joel Barker, in the late 80's, popularised Thomas Kuhn's concept of “paradigms,” and how when they change, everyone goes back to zero. The Internet and one of its spin-offs, e-commerce, are doing that. We are fast including it as part of our normal day-to-day business practices. Out of that falls a different organizational design, a different way of doing business, a different marketplace.

We have had [www.janedurant.com](http://www.janedurant.com) for three years and over the last 12 months have seen increasing business come from it. When people talk about the power of the Net, it is real!

For more information on Jane's work in China, visit [www.janedurant.com](http://www.janedurant.com), and if all else fails, go shopping, too!

*Jane*

CLIENT PROFILE

# Royal BC Museum



The Royal BC Museum is a well-known landmark for visitors to Victoria, British Columbia, sitting as it does between the Parliament Buildings and the stately Empress Hotel—the latter famous for its afternoon tea.

Since its founding 114 years ago, in 1886, RBCM’s collections have grown to about 10 million items, which document and describe the natural and human history of British Columbia.

Through three unique galleries, the Museum showcases the human and natural history of British Columbia, and features periodic exhibitions of international renown. Highly realistic and inviting displays, such as the Ice Age and Coastal Forest dioramas, provide visitors with a sense of having truly experienced the authentic settings of many exhibits. In addition, the National Geographic IMAX theatre offers visitors an exciting perspective on nature and its diversity.

About 30 millions visitors have enjoyed the RBCM since its present galleries were opened in 1968. A series of high-quality exhibits have continued to intrigue and excite visitors of all ages. Nearly 1 million people came during the “Empires Beyond the Great Wall: the Treasures of Genghis Khan” exhibit. These numbers have increased with the innovative “Leonardo” collection and the current, profound and moving “Out of the Mist” — and we wait with anticipation for “Circus Magicus” later this year.

The museum has a full-time staff of just over 130 that cover all day-to-day operational, research, and curatorial functions. In addition, nearly 400 volunteers also help to make the Museum a great place to visit. As well, the Museum has an excellent gift shop, offering a wide selection of “Made in BC” items suitable for every age and inclination.

Since December, I have been working with the Executive Team as they continue to implement their Strategic Business Plan and integrate into the organizational development of the people in the Museum. We will be working with most of the people over the next year as we participate in bringing the organizational priorities into line with the strategic objectives.

To read more about the Royal BC Museum, check out its website at <http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca>.

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## Workplace Learning

This material is taken from *Workplace Learning, Culture and Performance* by *Elliot Stern and Elizabeth Sommerland* and reproduced with the permission of the publisher, the Institute of Personnel and Development, IPD House, Camp Road, London SW19 4UX, UK. [www.ipd.co.uk](http://www.ipd.co.uk)

While there is widespread interest in workplace learning, the report indicates these three important observations:

- Workplace learning practices often lag behind a commitment to the philosophy of a “learning organization,” even among those companies reputed to be “leading edge” in their human resource development strategies.
- Many factors inhibit effective workplace learning, not all of them amenable to good management practice.
- Those responsible for introducing new forms of working/learning often have insufficient regard for the micro-politics of the workplace.

*Follow-up* is published two or three times a year for clients and friends of Jane Durant. We hope it helps you get better results for yourselves and others. If you would like the opportunity to be part of a future issue, or if you would simply like to receive a copy, please call, e-mail or write me at:

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