

SKINDEEP

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Double U, Double U, Double U, dot, co, dot uk. Confused by all this internet technobabble? Read this. Get sorted.

Whether you are a clueless newbie or been a cyberpunk long enough to be a knowbie, there's a lot of stuff on the world wide web relating to tattooing.

To start with you'll need some pretty expensive kit. A computer, a modem and an account with an internet service provider. The modem is used to connect your computer with your service provider's computer. It turns the computer signal into an audio tone for transmission across your telephone line. When you first connect, you can hear the tones, similar to the tone of a fax. Computer geeks call it modem mantra. It sounds like:

'Ennnnbeepboopbeepbopbeepbriing<click>screeeeCrunchBeCrackle<click>.

Your internet provider has some pretty awesome computer power, and can connect your computer to another anywhere in the world. A wide range of computers can be accessed, from small personals, to giant databases in government departments and educational institutions. That's about it really. Internet anoraks should read a specialist magazine for more information about this

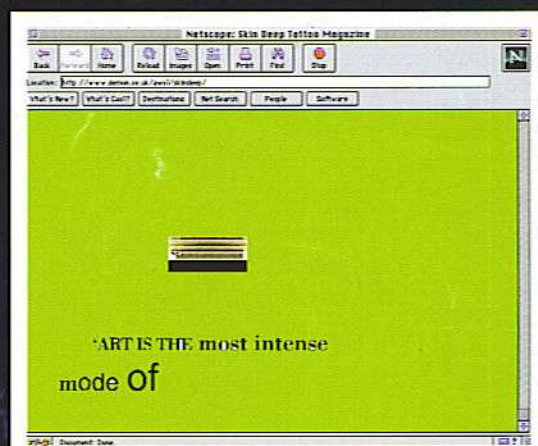
end of things.

Once connected, then what? Well, an address is needed. Website addresses are those indecipherable words beginning with <http://www>. For example, the address for the Skin Deep website is <http://www.demon.co.uk/awol/skindeep>.

The [http](http://) bit tells the computer that it is

making a world wide web connection and that it should use HyperText Transfer Protocol. The www.demon.co.uk bit is the location of the internet service provider's computer, in this case a company called Demon Internet. The last bit: awol/skindeep tells the computer where to find Skin Deep's web pages.

There are a couple of ways of finding other



sites call themselves) will include hyperlinks to other relevant sites. They look **like this**, and by clicking the mouse on this highlighted text ("What's a mouse?" - RTFM*) you'll be automatically taken to the website to which it refers. Neat eh?

If you haven't yet got the gear to connect to the internet, take a hike to the nearest cybercafé. You can go online for about £5 an hour over a coffee. Check out an internet specialist mag for the address of your nearest. If you can't afford either, then create your own virtually virtual reality homepage by using Skin Deep's Free virtual web browser elsewhere on this page.

So, once connected, what can you expect to find? **Let's go surfin'...**

On his homepage, New Zealander Jack Elder describes how he spent years contemplating and planning his tattoo; "I had a childlike fascination with the concept of wearing an image for the rest of my life," he explains, "I essentially realised that people I could relate to and be friends with got tattoos... that it wasn't quite the sole province of violent bikies that I'd been led to believe." Jack got his first tattoo in 1994,

sites. The first is to use a search engine, the second is by following hyperlinks. A search engine is a website that has a powerful database that automatically searches the world wide web, on its own (clever little thing), to look for websites and identify keywords. When you access the search engine, you are invited to type in a single or multiple keyword/s. Within seconds, the search engine will give you a list of all the websites that it knows of that make reference to your keyword. Type in for example "tattoo" and the search engine will return over 20,000 addresses that make reference to the word tattoo. Not only will it return sites referring to tattooing as body art, it will return the Edinburgh Tattoo, rock bands that call themselves nice names like Devil Tattoo and so on. Be specific, but not too specific.

Now. These hyperlink thingies. When you reach a website, most webmasters (that's what the people that create web-



"When it was finished, I was so pleased with the design, I can't express it. It's a killer buzz." Compare this with the 'intellectual' musings of Psychiatrist James F. Hooper from Alabama on his web-page 'Icons of Flesh'; "I learned that tattoos and sociopaths often occurred together. The more tattoos the more likely a diagnosis of psychopathic personality became."

So psychos, let's cruise to a website that cannot be taken lightly. The Soviet Prison Camp Tattoo page is dedicated to the "little-known art of tattoo design in prison camps of the former Soviet Union." The author describes how tattoos developed to allow prisoners to communicate secretly amongst themselves. It gives examples of tattoos applied forcibly, without the consent of the

prisoner, to convey such messages as; "Don't confide in me - I may not be trustworthy."

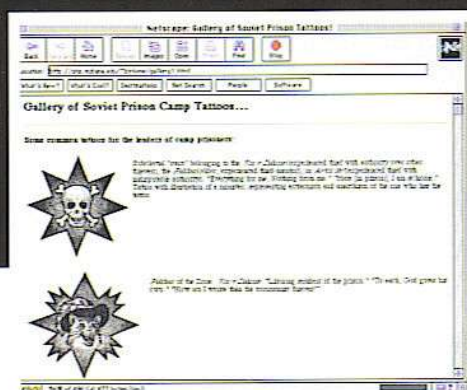
Apparently prisoners had no access to normal tattoo ink and had to resort to; "such exotic ink substitutes as burned leather and urine." (mmm... lovely).

At a site called simply "The Tattoo Artist", a short narrative describes one guy's evolution from; "The squalid roach-infested public-housing shell where you grew up" into a "skilled and dedicated artist with a vision to convey." He describes his very first tattoo, a dragon. "When you finally needed in the last scale, you could have sworn the dragon opened its eyes and breathed." he

says, and goes on, "This had been a test, and you had passed. You would now have eternity to express yourself."

Traditional Japanese tattooing is described on the 'What is Tebori?' website. It includes a picture of a scythian design done in Tebori and is just one of the sites hosted in a web called Tattoo.com, home to dozens of websites dedicated to the art of the tattoo.

Some websites contain text only, but



the majority also contain graphics ranging from simple designs to high resolution full colour images of people and their tattoos. The higher the resolution, and therefore the quality of the image, the longer the image takes to download (get down the wire to your computer). Various other factors also affect the speed of download too, your modem speed and the specification of your computer, for example.

If you need information about tattooing that you can't find elsewhere, you can use a newsgroup. Here you can post messages for other subscribers to read, discuss and respond to. The newsgroup 'rec.arts.bodyart' regularly carries over 700 messages at any one time. Recent topics included a subscriber who wrote: "A friend of mine said she read in a magazine about a woman who could not get an MRI (a type of diagnostic scan) because of her tattoo. Just wondering if anyone knows anything about this..." Another wrote: "I am a UK based photographer looking for people with interesting tattoos/piercings to sit for me." And from Sid: "Got a flu shot last Monday. I rolled up my sleeve

and the nurse said 'That's very colourful' and proceeded to stick me right on the dragon's snout (no clear skin at all on my upper arm). Didn't faze her at all."

Stay cool though. Messages are usually genuine, but some can be hostile, racist, homophobic and bigoted. It is usually best not to respond to these. That's what they want you to do. Also, be warned that some messages have absolutely nothing to do with the subject. Some try to sell you things, including sex. Some are downright pornographic in nature. OK if that's what you want, but if you frighten easily, be warned. And for the sake of the kids, don't let them go surfing on their own!

If you want to protect your kids from pornography, or other harmful nasty stuff on the net, there is software available to help. Some refuse to accept words like sex or

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any of those other naughty words that children giggle about, but they aren't foolproof. A high profile was recently given to a new system that detects pornographic images by analysing the amount of flesh colour on the screen. That's great, but it don't stop tattooed naked flesh gettin' through, but maybe that's the way it should be. See ya :-)

Glossary of cyber terms

:-) User is happy.

Clueless newbie One who is new to the world of online communications.

Cyberpunk A lifestyle characterised by internet surfing, and large doses of attitude.

Knowbie Someone who understands the finer details of computer networking.

RTFM Acronym for Read The F*****g Manual

Directory of some interesting sites

100 Years of Tattoo Art

<http://tattoos.com/newyork.htm>

A Darker Side

<http://www.neosoft.com/~muadeb/tattoo.htm>

Art with a Pulse

<http://www.pcisys.net/%7Edmr/awap.html>

Beauty is Skin Deep - Portland

<http://www.bizwizard.com/97201/beautyis/index.html>

Big Bother Tattoo

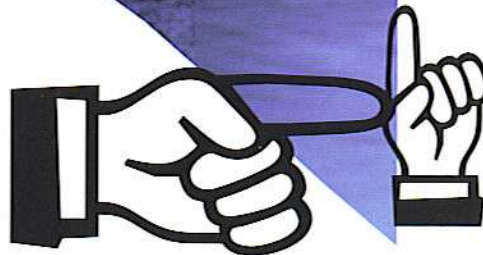
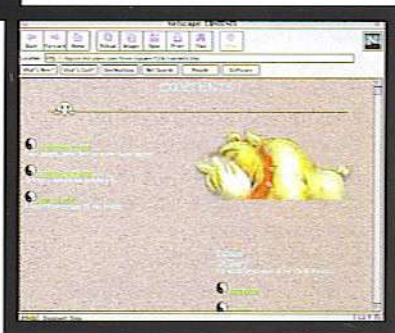
<http://www.flash.net/%7Ebigbro/>

Bobby D's Personal Expressions

<http://www.kdl-ventures.com/advert/bobbyd.html>

Bodyart Book Reviews

<http://members.aol.com/BABookRevs/index.html>



skin surfing

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Dark Images
 DragonLady Home Page
 ED's underground Tattooing
 Endo's War Paint Tattoos
 Flyin' Gypsy Tattoo Studios
 Infinite Art Tattoo Studio
 James Hooper - 'Icons of Flesh'
 Japanese Site
 Laser Tattoo Removal
 Little Kitty Scratches Tattoos
 Modern Art Tattoo Studio
 New York City Tattoo
 New York Tattoo
 Official Dogrooe Tattoo Page
 Oottat tattoo Parlour
 Pat Fish's Tattoo
 Professional Tattoo Institute
 Sacred Heart Tattoo
 Safe Tattooing
 Singapore John's Tattoo
 Skeletal Remains
 SkinSin Homepage
 Soviet Prisoner Tattoos
 Sportsman's Tattoo
 Starlight Tattoo Home Page
 Starsong's Tattoo Page
 Superior Tattoo
 Tattoo America
 Tattoo Art by George
 Tattoo Asylum
 Tattoo Books - Hardy Marks
 Tattoo Central
 Tattoo designs - Hawaii
 Tattoo Heaven
 Tattoo Revolution
 Tattoo Safety
 Tattoo Studio
 Tattoo Talk
 Tattoo Teacher
 Tattoo Zoo
 Tattoo's - Yellow Pages
 Tattoos from Soviet Prisons
 Tattoos.Com
 Tattoos.com ezine links
 Tebori (Japanese)Tattooing
 The Enigma of the Total Tattoo
 VooDoo Tattoo

<http://darkimages.com/cain.html>
<http://www.n-link.com/%7Edragonlady/tattoo/index.htm>
<http://www.notoriousedstattoo.com/>
<http://www.lightcom.net/users/endo/studio.htm>
<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/lofts/1042/>
<http://www.iatattoo.com/>
<http://www.cityscape.co.uk/users/ad88/tattoo.htm>
<http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~VU6M-YMD/>
<http://www.city2000.com/hf/dltreatment>
<http://www.carnivore.net/kitty/home.htm>
<http://ww2.isys.ca/tattoo/tattoo.htm>
<http://tattoos.com/bowrey.htm>
<http://www.newyorktattoo.com/>
<http://www.ansi.net/%7Edogrooe/tat.html>
<http://www.goldengate.net/%7Elanebee/oottat.html>
<http://www.art-tattoo.com/>
<http://www.wsii.com/users/tattoo/docspage.htm>
<http://www.sacredhearttattoo.com/>
<http://tattoos.com/safe.htm>
<http://www.singaporejohns.com/>
<http://www.rollanet.org/~cat>
<http://members.aol.com/skinsin71/tattoo/index.htm>
<http://php.indiana.edu/~birkene>
<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Towers/9304/>
<http://www.starlighttattoo.com/index.html>
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/7582/tattoo.html>
<http://www.superiortattoo.com/>
<http://www.quikpage.com/T/tattooamerica/>
<http://leaty.huron.net/~geolewis/>
<http://www.geocities.com/soho/studios/6916>
<http://tattoos.com/hmarks/books.htm>
<http://www.tattoomag.com/>
<http://www.hilo.org/tattoo/>
<http://www.zapcom.net/phoenix.arabeth/tatHev.html>
<http://tattoorevolution.com/>
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/healthwise/0370.html>
<http://members.aol.com/rlsavage/page1.htm>
<http://geocities.com/BouboonStreet/Delta/2512>
<http://www.captain-tattoo.com/>
<http://www.islandnet.com/tattoozoo/homepage.html>
<http://tattoos.com/yellow>
<http://ezinfo.ucc.indiana.edu/%7Ebirkene/prison.html>
<http://www.tattoos.com>
<http://tattoos.com/morelink.htm>
<http://www.tattoos.com/abstract/tebori.htm>
<http://tattoos.com/katzen.htm>
<http://home.interhop.net/%7Ecalexander/intro.html>



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Disclaimer

The author accepts no responsibility for the content of any of the above internet addresses. At the time of writing, each address was carefully checked for accuracy and content and found to be satisfactory. Readers should note that addresses may change (or cease to exist by the time this article goes to print) and that the content of each address is dictated by the host of each site. No recommendation is given or implied by the inclusion or exclusion of any website or internet service.