Some ideas for thumbnails in the directory - needs more thought

From the IRC log:

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mdavey   just had a wicked cool idea
mdavey   Just updated TikiWIkiBestOf with images from thumbshots:
mdavey   Then I thought: wouldn't it be cool if the Tiki directory could have images of the
          links so that the layout
          is similar to articles with images
mdavey   - using thumbshots URLs to generate the thumbnails. Of course, it would only work
          for external sites that are
          in dmoz. tw.o and damosoft.co.uk are both there :)
mdavey   thinks it /would/ be cool
[...]
mose    thinks the thumbshot idea sounds cool
damian  yeah I think the thumbnail but having to rely on dmoz could be a issue
mdavey   mm. Best to give directory entries an image URL. More flexible - one could
          alternatively create a directory
          section called "External articles" and use the same images as the internal articles use.
mdavey   I'm sure it won't be too long before google offers image snapshots of search
          results.
mdavey   s/image/page/
damian  it would be better if we could generate them ourselves as relying on third parties
          causes terrible problems, for
          example the current situation with external RSS feeds
damian  if the external site is having trouble, the tiki die's a death also
[...]
mdavey   damian doesn't RSS get cached now?
mdavey   perhaps the directory thumbnails could be cached too. They probably don't change
          that often.
[...]
damian  yeah the problem is to get the data into the cache
mdavey   how does the RSS caching work? It would be easy to create an image.php?url=foo
          script that either serves up the
          proper image or an invisible image (or a 1x1 px image) if the image hasn't been cached
          yet. Once it is cached, it is cached.
damian  the problem is waiting for a timeout from the remote server
mdavey   one could even make sure that dmoz wasn't serving /us/ a blank or 1x1 px image
damian  because you cant background process a get
mdavey   ah
damian  on tikihost.net in the users control panel there are options to do those
          backgrounds now as a cronjob to prevent
          the tiki site from dieing a death
damian  it also handles mail-ins
mdavey   are there issues with running such a thing from the command line?
damian  not everyone can do cronjobs
[...]
mdavey   on tikihost.net - does that work by not using unix cron jobs, or is "not everyone
          can do cronjobs" still an issue
[...]
```
damian  nope the fix was to disable the cache :)
burley  ok, then that's something I'll be looking into.
damian and I did some new scripts to stuff the data into the tiki db's
mdavey  so would the way to do this simply be "the same as rss does it"?
damian  rss does it in real time in tikiwiki, if the site your getting the feed from is
down, your tiki also hangs
[...]
damian  once you have it cached your ok, until the cache expires in x hours
mdavey  ...the same way as rss does it on tikihosts.net?
damian  with cronjob gets tiki only displays what is in the db and doesnt do the remote
site getting
damian  so if the remote site is down, it doesnt harm your tiki site
damian  yup rss and mailin are all available as cron services