

SCIENCE

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EDITORIAL

New On-Line Tools for Scholars: 1

These days, seasoned researchers as well as students of science must constantly battle an information overload that gets in the way of their pursuit of knowledge. Scientists are always playing catch-up in an attempt to stay abreast of the literature, whether their interests are narrowly or broadly focused.

Science cannot escape some responsibility as a contributor to this information glut. As a broadly based weekly journal of original research findings, we aim to communicate to our readers the latest important research events, whether first reported in our own pages or in other journals. We also strive to provide international scientific coverage of discoveries, as viewed by both scientists and science journalists. But how do our readers stay afloat in this constant flood of new information? We suspect that after readers flip through the latest issue looking for news stories and new results pertinent to their fields of interest, the issue goes onto a pile, awaiting that elusive moment of free time when the interesting papers can be recovered and studied in depth. Frequently, the desire to learn is overwhelmed by the desperation caused by having too little time and too much to do.

Since the launch of our World Wide Web pages (URL: <http://www.aaas.org/>) on 23 June 1995, we have been sampling the reactions of readers who are attracted to this form of scientific information exchange. So far, our "Beyond the Printed Page" features have expanded the kinds of information we offer our readers to include supplements to the printed material and forums for exchanges of ideas and interpretations, as well as the opportunity to gain a preview of what the printed version will contain when it arrives.

Beginning with this issue, the printed material of *Science* should become much more accessible to the busy scholar. *Science* in print will now be complemented by "Science On-Line" (URL: <http://science-mag.aaas.org/science/>), jointly developed with HighWire Press of the Stanford University Library. This new version of our electronic communication channel allows us to move ahead with the first in a series of new tools for organizing the information we and others publish.

In addition to full text of the Table of Contents, the Editorial, and This Week in *Science*, "Science On-Line" will offer full abstracts of all original Research Articles and Reports; summaries of the Perspectives, Policy Forums, Research News, and News and Comment features; a Table of Contents organized by subject area; and links between related features. Furthermore, through the use of a simple but potent search engine developed by HighWire to fit our needs, "Science On-Line" readers can now recover from their piles that long-lost item that looked so interesting when it arrived. Beginning with the 6 October issue, readers can search by authors, key words, or dates. The search results will indicate if the item is an Article, Report, News story, Perspective, and so on. As our digital archives accumulate, threads connecting general topics will emerge so that one can begin to put into perspective the ways in which new data and ideas relate to previous items on related topics.

In keeping with our goal of providing our readers with more tools to aid their scholarly pursuits, our new electronic armamentarium also includes access to the databases of the Community of Science, to allow users to identify others working in a given area of science and to communicate directly with them. In addition, through special arrangements with the Community of Science, browsers at our Web site can access the Federally Funded Research databases of projects already under way. "Science On-Line" also features new links to "Science's Electronic Marketplace," where the latest information on tools, reagents, and other devices, as well as research-related services, can be acquired. Links to the Global Career Network will provide the latest information on job opportunities, searchable by key words. More new interactive features have been added to "Science's Next Wave," now taking on a life of its own in providing new facts and people connections for those beginning their scientific careers.

We invite experienced browsers of the first edition of *Science's* Web page, as well as those who are curious but Web-wary, to take a look. All of these tools are freely available for now. We ask only that you tell us about yourself via the guestbook button the first time you browse, and give us your impressions via the feedback button when you have used the system. The next additions to our tool kit for science scholars are already well along in their development. We look forward to your suggestions.

Floyd E. Bloom