



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Natural Resources Management Branch

CAREER NOTES

Number 96-1 • Publication of the Career Development Steering Committee • March 1996

Step up performance with the Internet

"It's not a toy, it's a tool. How you use that tool impacts your productivity."

We have all had some contact with or at least heard about the Internet. So what's the big deal? People worldwide are finding that using the Internet increases their productivity by saving time, effort and money. It broadens the sphere of inquiry when researching a topic and it allows organizations an efficient and attractive means to communicate to the world. This article summarizes input from four Corps employees relating their impressions of the Internet.

Universally, they suggested that the Internet is often the best vehicle for sharing information with colleagues or the public. It can be more efficient than phoning because you eliminate "phone tag" and the caller and receiver can interact at their convenience. Communication to multiple users is greatly facilitated and, if needed, the message

provides a record for later reference. It is faster than using the postal system and because no material must be generated or transported, it has fewer negative environmental implications. There is generally a fixed minimum cost and hourly usage fee associated with Internet access. Some services build in a monthly allowance of free access time. Wise use of this resource can easily yield savings in reduced mail and phone charges. The personnel that we spoke with gave examples of how the Internet has helped them to better do their job.

Diane Parks, Park Manager in the Portland District uses Internet e-mail to maintain professional contacts throughout the US. "I can check with colleagues to learn if they've had any experience in their district related to a program that we are implementing. I can learn from their trials and tribulations." It also makes it easier for Diane to take her work with her. She sends her files to and from her home via her America Online account. This allows her to continue working off-site and eliminates the need to copy her files to disk and transport them manually.

Around 10 years ago, Frank Star from the St. Paul District was a member of a small group whose efforts resulted in the establishment of NRPA's

Contents

Step up performance _____	1
Accessing the Internet _____	3
CDSC members _____	4

Schole on Delphi. He has always been intrigued by the idea of contacting his peers using e-mail. "I have used it to contact NRPA folks, Forest Service and Park Service employees, and private citizens."

Debra Stokes, Park Manager at the Franklin Falls/Blackwater Dams Projects, has found Internet mail useful for her role as sign software program liaison between headquarters and the field. Internet gives her a quick direct line to the division and district sign coordinators. She has used it to transfer computer files for the program and to update price lists. "It's especially useful for forwarding files. It cuts down my costs because I don't have to waste paper, floppies, or time. and there's no worry about my message getting changed. All of these efficiencies cut down my costs."

Information Retrieval

The World Wide Web (Web) is an excellent tool for gathering information. Diane uses her browser to find details on public laws which relate to programs that she is managing in the district. This is much faster. "I used to wait for information to be passed down through HQ and the division offices or even read about it in the newspaper. Now, I browse the World Wide Web picking up bits and pieces of a bigger picture that would have been too cumbersome to distribute to all employees."

Frank has gone into the Library of Congress to download proposed Congressional legislation, part of the Federal Register, and accessed weather maps. "You can hop from one library to another looking for books. You can also see what other government agencies are doing." He also mentioned the newly established NRPA home page (<http://www.als.uiuc.edu/nrpa/>) which he feels has potential to be quite useful for recreation-related information. Frank says that the Internet has information on just about every recreational activity. "More and more, people will use this resource to plan their vacations and other recreational activities."

Information Dissemination

The Corps is slowly becoming established on the Web with a Headquarters official site and most labs and several districts having home pages. Headquarters is also beginning to take advantage of the timeliness afforded by the Internet e-mail for information distribution. Frank believes that soon, all the information the Corps provides to the public will be available via Internet. The public will access Corps pages to get the information they want (recreation, brochures, bid contracts, public meeting notices, etc.). If they need additional material sent, it can be requested on-line.

Mark Andreason, who helped to build the home page for Libby Dam says the Internet is a great way to get information out to other professionals. On their Web site, information concerning the construction and success of an artificial bald eagle nest can be found. Information regarding the progress of the eaglets and the construction of the nest is posted. Through the use of the Internet, this information is made available to other biologists who may be looking at Corps information or specifically looking for bald eagle information. "We built a link which promotes ease of navigation on the Internet to more detailed eagle information," says Mark. River data is routinely collected at Libby Dam and is now linked to their home page as well as data from other sites in the Columbia River watershed. Libby Dam can be "seen" with the help of a virtual tour guide who takes visitors on a tour similar to those given on-site. Great visuals are used and Mark hopes to incorporate video and sound in the future. You can visit the site at: <http://www.nps.usace.army.mil/opdiv/libby/libby1.html>.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges associated with the Internet is learning to use it. The Internet is easiest to use if you can use a web browser. Debra reports that the projects in her district do not have access to a web browser that will work between remote locations and the mainframe at the division office (the browser is a type of software that simplifies

Web navigation which facilitates efficient information retrieval). Without a browser, access to the Internet is very cumbersome. The former natural resources management bulletin board provided a database for training, professional meetings and jobs. With that information now on the Web, she feels the inability to access this information via modem is a huge setback. Frank mentions a compatibility problem that emerges when pages are written to take advantage of a particular browser's capabilities. If a different browser is used, the page can be jumbled and difficult to read.

Summary

Debra feels that we need to provide better customer care for our "in-house" customers (Corps employees). "We have an incredibly talented staff. Our communication on job availability between districts and divisions is lacking. We must help them get the information to become better team members." Some supervisors express the concern that employees will use the Web as a form of "play." Debra counters that most Corps personnel are finding that their jobs are expanding while staff and budgets are not. "I do not know of anyone who has time to play." The Internet improves the productivity of the Corps' most valuable resource, team members, by facilitating the speedy exchange of information and ideas. It can cut the time it takes to do a particular job. Simply put by Mark, "It's not a toy, it's a tool. How you use that tool impacts your productivity."

By: Karen Colvin, Career Development Steering Committee Office, The Ohio State University and

Contributors:

Mark Andreason- Park Ranger - Libby Dam Project
Diane Parks- Park Manager - Portland District
Frank Star - Outdoor Recreation Planner-St. Paul District
Debra Stokes-Park Manager - Franklin Falls/Blackwater Dams Projects

Accessing the Internet

To access the Natural Resources Management World-Wide Web pages, you need an internet connection and a program called a browser. Below are instructions for using Mosaic and Netscape, two popular browsers, to look at the NRM Web pages. To begin: click on the Mosaic or Netscape icon. The Welcome Screen appears. If accessing for the first time: SET YOUR STARTING PAGE. Both browsers allow you to start at the Corps of Engineers home page or at the NRM pages by simply filling in the page location in the appropriate field in a dialog box on your screen. The location of the Corps home page is:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/>

The location of the NRM starting page is:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/nrm/>

All letters must be lower case.

Mosaic: Using Windows, from the Options menu, select Preferences. The "document" screen has a field for "Home Page." Enter the location of the page you want as your own starting point. On a Macintosh, from the Options menu, select Preferences. The "Misc" screen has a field for "Home

Career notes

Career Notes is a quarterly newsletter of the Natural Resources Management Career Development Steering Committee designed to address concerns and needs of field personnel in the areas of training and career development. You may communicate with *Career Notes* directly at the CDSC office or through your division's representative on the Career Development Steering Committee (see page 4).

John Hanna - Editor - JWHanna @ AOL.com

**Career Development Steering Committee
School of Natural Resources
The Ohio State University
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1085**

Page." Enter the location of the page you want as your own starting point.

Netscape: Using Windows, from the Options menu, select "Preferences." Choose "Styles" at the "Set Preferences On:" prompt. Make sure that "Pictures and Text" and "Home Page Location" are designated. Type in your http:address in the area provided. Click on "OK." Once you have this set, you can jump back to your starting point at any time by pressing the house-shaped icon on your button bar.

Hotlists/bookmarks

Both browsers provide a shortcut to jump instantly to any page you use frequently or want to remember for later use. In Mosaic, these are called Hotlists. In Netscape, they are called Bookmarks.

Mosaic: To add your current page to the hotlist from Windows or the Macintosh, use the "Navigate" pull-down menu. Select "Add Current to Hotlist" from Windows or "Add This Document" from a Macintosh. To jump to a page on your hotlist from Windows, pull down the hotlist menu. It may be called "Starting Points." Select the title of the page you want. If you don't have a hotlist item on the menu bar, talk to your IM support. From the Macintosh, pull down the "Navigate" menu, select "Hotlists," and double click on the title of the page you want.

Netscape: To create a Bookmark on Netscape, click on the "Bookmarks" icon. Press enter after the already highlighted "Add Bookmarks" appears. This location is then saved. The next time, you can access the location with the Bookmark tool by using the mouse or cursor to highlight your choice and pressing "Enter." Hotlists and bookmarks have many features beyond the scope of these brief instructions, but they are worth exploring.

By: Don MacLeod, Cold Regions Lab and Karen Colvin, Career Development Steering Committee Office, The Ohio State University

CDSC members

Chief's Office, NRMB - CECW-ON (CorpsMail)

Steve Austin, HQUSACE (CECW-ON), 20 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington, D.C. 20314-1000
phone: (202) 761-1796 FAX: (202) 761-1671

North Atlantic Division - CENAB-OPF-R

Dwight Beall, Corps of Engineers, Raystown Lake Office, RD#1, Box 222, Hesston, PA 16647-9227
phone: (814) 658-3405 ext. 203 FAX: (814) 658-3313

Missouri River Division - CEMRD

Mac Carlisle, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, R.R. 1, Box 370, Melvern, KS 66510
phone: (913) 549-3318 FAX: (913) 549-3611

Chair - Ohio River Division - CEORD-DL-E

Debby Chenoweth, U. S. Army Engineer Division, Ohio River ATTN: CEORD-DL-E (Chenoweth), P.O. Box 1159, Cincinnati, OH 45201-1159
phone: (513) 684-6038 FAX: (513) 684-3963

Southwestern Division - CESWF-OD-GR

Charles Burger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Grapevine Lake Office, 110 Fairway Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051
phone: (817) 481-4541 FAX: (817) 481-5244

North Central Division - CENCR-OD-R

George Hardison, U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island, ATTN: Hardison, P.O. Box 2004, Clock Tower Building, Rock Island, IL 61204-2004
phone: (309) 794-5332 FAX: (309) 794-5180

New England Division - CENED-OD-P

Bob Heald, U. S. Army Engineer Division, New England, ATTN: CENED-OD-P (Heald), 424 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02254
phone: (617) 647-8305 FAX: (617) 647-8378

Ohio River Division - CEORN-CO-R

Ralph Ownby, U.S. Army Engineer Dist., Nashville, Attn: CEORN-CO-R
P.O. Box 1070, Nashville, TN 37202-1070
phone: (615) 736-5115 FAX: (615) 736-7490

Lower Mississippi Valley Div. - CELMK-OD-OO

Rick Stokes, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Ouachita Office, P.O. 1201 Blakely Dam Rd., Royal, AR 71968-9493
phone: (501) 767-2101 FAX: 767-4952

North Pacific Division - CENPD-ET-ON

Paul Peloquin, U. S. Army Engineer Division, North Pacific, ATTN: CENPD-CO-O-R (Peloquin), P.O. Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870
phone: (503) 326-6857 FAX: (503) 326-3522

South Pacific Division - CESPNO-CO-OV

Nancy Rogers, Bay Model Regional Visitor Center, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2100 Bridgeway Blvd., Sausalito, CA 94965-1764
phone: (415) 332-3871 FAX: (415) 332-0761

South Atlantic Division - CESAD-CO-R

Susan Whittington, U.S. Army Engineer Division, South Atlantic, ATTN: CESAD-CO-R, Room 313, 77 Forsythe Street, S. W., Atlanta, GA 30335-6801
phone: (404) 331-6746 FAX: (404) 331-2613