Internet Reviews

Sara Amato, editor

NATO Gopher. *Access:* gopher://gopher.nato.int or gopher://marvin.stc.nato.int. *Contact:* scheurwe@hq.nato.int.

There is a surprisingly large variety of information available on this gopher from NATO's Integrated Data Service. Anyone interested in defense, security, or international affairs in Europe will find this site valuable. It provides access to historical information on NATO and its development, in addition to information on its current activities, including its involvement in Bosnia.

Organizational and background information can be acquired from a number of sources, including a directory of public information officers, Basic Texts, the NATO Handbook, and Factsheets on specific aspects of NATO. Information is supplied on an extensive range of NATO activities, from its seminars, colloquia, fellowships, and scientific and environmental affairs to its military operations, including operations supporting the UN in the Balkans. There are communiques, press releases, even transcripts of press conferences. There is a surprising amount of historical information. The gopher provides the text of important documents, starting with the NATO treaty and ending with the Partnership for Peace Agreement, and official ministerial communiques.

One of this gopher's strengths is the other European international organizations hosted on it. These include some Atlantic Councils, Partnership for Peace Countries, and the Western European Union and its Assembly. The information contained in these resources varies considerably; numerous papers dealing with Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the defense of Western Europe can be found in these sections.

While this gopher provides a considerable amount of information, it does have two major shortcomings. One, it can be difficult to make a connection; it is generally better in the afternoon or at night, but there is no clear pattern. Efforts to reach the contact were unsuccessful. Second, related information can be hard to find as it may be located in a variety of places. Despite these drawbacks it still contains a wealth of information and is an excellent resource for European affairs.—*John K. Stemmer, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; jstemmer@vt.edu*

Sara Amato is automated systems librarian at Central Washington University; samato@tahoma.cwu.edu

Human Rights Gopher. *Access:* gopher gopher.humanrights.org. *URL:* gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:70/11/igc.

This gopher from the Institute of Global Communications (IGC), a nonprofit computer network and Internet service, increases our access to human rights information and is especially useful to those involved in education, journalism, health, and ecology. The main menu begins with five IGC computer networks including PeaceNet, EcoNet, ConflictNet, LaborNet, and WomensNet. The networks provide descriptions to their service and listings of conferences, news bulletins, and information on issues of concern to that particular network. As a member of any one of the IGC networks you have access to all of them. In addition, the IGC networks also have a presence on the World Wide Web (WWW) at http://www.igc.apc.org/ . Following the five IGC networks, the main menu continues with items on publications, organizations, and agencies, as well as other gophers and resources. There are entries for education and youth, race and ethnicity, health, and other subjects that contain listings of services, resources, and other networks, as well as explanations of various projects in that area.

One especially interesting item on the menu, under United Nations & International Agencies, is INFOTERRA, which covers a wealth of information on environmental concerns including resources available for research and education, news items, directories, and citations to ecological documents. The subjects include acid rain, reforestation, rainforests, etc. It also lists upcoming environmental meetings and publications.

This site is well organized—no small task considering the wealth of information available—and a welcome compilation of various organizations, agencies, and materials with a common purpose. It has grown since I first saw it a month ago and will continue to grow as other like-minded groups join the effort. It will benefit educators, academics, and others concerned with the health and well-being of our planet.—*Emily S. Chasse, Central Connecticut State University; Chasse@ccsua.ctstateu.edu*

NSF MetaCenter Computational Science Highlights. *Access:* http://www.tc.cornell.edu/Research/MetaScience/. *Other addresses:* http://www.ucar.edu/docs/MetaSoft; http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SCMS/Metascience/Home/welcome.html; http://pscinfo.psc.edu/MetaCenter/MetaScience/welcome.html; http://www.sdsc.edu/MetaScience/welcome.html.

This Web site is the collaborative effort of five National Science Foundation (NSF)-supported supercomputing centers: the Cornell Theory Center (CTC), National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center (PSC), and San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC). Its aim is to serve as a distributed repository of multimedia science reports and articles, including graphics, sounds, and video animations, with appeal to a nontechnical audience. More specifically, the collection contains descriptions of selected research projects that have used the NSF's supercomputing resources. A February 1995 NSF press release noted report topics ranging from "simulating the behavior of cancer genes" to "Comet Shoemaker-Levy's impact on Jupiter" to "high-resolution animation of the general circulation of the North Atlantic." The supporting NSF installations use a shared, automated indexing system, allowing each contributing center to develop and maintain its own documents, but allowing each site access to all contributed documents through keyword searches and browsing.

Exploration of Computational Science Highlights revealed that it does contain some very impressive resources and features, including sound (all reports contain images), and some excellent video animations (which, due to size, may be slow to download even to a 486 PC). Librarians will no doubt appreciate both the classification of reports by the NSF's Fields of Science codes. Reports seem to include standard fields—many of them hot links—for researchers' names and affiliations, hardware and software used, subject key words, references, acknowledgments, credits, and related material available on the Web.

This site has some weaknesses. The first is that it is simply confusing. There are five different URLs, corresponding to the five supercomputing centers, and one of these links (to NCAR) has already moved. And while the MetaCenter claims to provide "a unified national resource," searchers will find that their results vary from site to site. One site showed 128 articles available, while others showed 167. These numbers also reflect the lack of breadth of substance of the database. The creators do state that Computational Highlights describe "*some* of the (NSF's) 10,000 scientific research projects," and, in fact, the 167 articles found were all that are indexed and available at this writing. So, while the records in the collection are individually very rich, the collection itself is still quite small, containing just highlights.

Finally, there are some problems with the homepages' design. One is invited to browse by field of science or key word, but clicking on highlighted text sends one to a dead-end list of information at the San Diego site (which is often down), whereas clicking on a highlighted button with the same label provides one with a successful connection to additional hypertext information at the Cornell site. It's unclear what the different search options are supposed to offer, and why they are inconsistent.

Developers hope for future enhancements to the Computational Science Highlights, including new contributors and full-text search/indexing of articles. The MetaCenter has the potential to be an outstanding source of science data with some adjustments to its organization and interface, and a boost of new records to its database.—*Judith Matthews, Michigan State University; matthews@msupa.pa.msu.edu* ■