

IAMSE WEB-SIGHT

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Insight! Oversight! Hindsight! Out of Sight! Welcome now to WebSight! Actually, all these terms apply to the Web. The worldwide web has come to represent the good, the bad, and the ugly. It also represents the future – a means of information and communication exchange that would make Gutenberg drool on his presses! We hope this new column will help keep you informed about what's currently available, and what you may look forward to seeing, on the many informative webpages of the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE). Check it out at <<http://www.IAMSE.org>>, and consider this ongoing feature essentially a view from the Website. Or WebSight!

In politics they say vote, and vote often. Here we say, visit, and visit often. Someone must be listening, since we currently record, on average, some 85 “hits” per month. Our goal is to make it a very useful and user-friendly site for medical educators, so your comments, suggestions, and ideas are always welcome. Currently, the homepage features convenient links to our Mission Statement, Bylaws, information on the benefits of joining IAMSE, direct access to the Officers and Directors, and to the Editorial Board of our semi-annual journal. Six prominent icons provide access to our major categories of information. And that's not to mention a “Hot Stuff” page which gives the repeat visitor opportunity to see what was added since their last visit!

Navigating off from the **PUBLICATIONS** icon, one discovers information on how to obtain proceedings of previous biennial conferences (and soon, other IAMSE publications), and the *Basic Science Educator* (BSE). Tables of contents for recent issues of the BSE, listings of Columns and Features, as well as information on how to submit articles and contact Associate Editors are all only a “click” away. **CONFERENCES** contains complete information on these past biennial events, with links to individual conference descriptions, their daily programs, information both for and about our financial sponsors, etc. Importantly, this is also where up-to-the-minute information regarding upcoming conferences can be found. Make certain to bookmark the link to our Fourth Biennial International IAMSE Conference <www.IAMSE.org/4bicmenu.htm> coming this July 17-20, 1999, and follow progress as it develops. Included for your convenience are links to travel related sites, where one can obtain information on world currency exchange, maps, weather, and even language; useful information for those attending IAMSE (or other) international events.

MEMBERSHIP provides links to IAMSE participating

medical colleges and universities throughout the world, while **PROJECTS** contains a listing of current and future IAMSE endeavors. The **SPONSORS** icon takes you to a listing of our current Annual Corporate Sponsors. It also leads to information on the benefits provided to commercial companies for IAMSE sponsorship and how to apply. Our **LINKS** page will quickly connect you with search engines, and an ever-expanding list of educational and medical discipline-related websites. As these expand, appropriate link sub-categories will be developed.

Soon we will be adding a “Calendar of Events” page with notices of other upcoming meetings, workshops, or similar events of interest to IAMSE members. Also under development are plans to more fully capitalize on the interactive potentials of the web. Features likely to be developed first will be “discussion groups” threaded around topics of major interest and both real-time and delayed on-line offerings of faculty development workshops.

The “distance learning” aspects of using the web are enormous. And with the diversity of backgrounds and expertise in our organization, the web becomes a natural means by which to collaborate and learn from one another (see article on page 18 of this issue of the BSE as example). At my institution (St. Louis University) we have adopted the WebCT (Web Course Tools) program developed at the University of British Columbia <<http://homebrew.cs.ubc.ca/webct/>> as our platform for creating web-based courseware and distance learning courses. This is a tool that facilitates the creation of sophisticated worldwide web-based educational environments by non-technical users. Evaluation of the usefulness of programs such as these to deliver course materials to students, as well as to faculty, would certainly be useful as we all struggle to get the most out of the technologies available.

Please let us know how you feel about such issues and how best we may develop the IAMSE website to accommodate your interests and needs. Although I am stepping down as Webmaster, my replacement, Ms. Julie Hewett, has already hit the ground running! Her first contribution was to secure the domain site, which now makes us <<http://www.IAMSE.org>>; and by the time you read this, she will have the logistics conquered for that Calendar of Events I mentioned above. You can reach our new “Webmistress” with your comments and suggestions at <Julie@IAMSE.org>

As the motto from my favorite television program says, “The Truth Is Out There!” So let's put it on our website!