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SCIENCE NEWS SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

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Science is the design or conduct of reproducible experiments to test how nature works, or formulation of theories that can themselves be tested by such experiments. It is the research that makes science so powerful and exciting. Science adds to our store of knowledge. It is the seeking that makes science what it is. Research is the very important component of science.

Scholarly journals report the results of research, but only months after the fact. Given the high and increasing costs of paper publishing, they are expensive. This puts them virtually out of reach for many individuals and even many institutions, especially those in less developed nations. Even the appearance of E-journals have not solved the problem, because of the high cost of subscription. So, there is a need for a faster and cheaper medium of communication of science news.

This paper, discusses about the fast and cheaper mode of communications of science news, i.e. 'Science news on the web'. Bits move virtually instantaneously; a news release sent by e-mail can be on any World Wide Web news page within minutes. These are the forces that come together to make a science news service on the web a virtual necessity. Many of the sites in the Internet have been dedicated for Science and Technology news. They are discussed in detail. These include Scinews, Eurekalert, Scicentral, Unisci, Scilink, Sciencedaily, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Science is also the orderly observation of events that cannot yet be manipulated, and, ultimately, the testing of many different such observations as the basis for theories to explain the events. This makes science the one human activity that seeks knowledge in an organized way. Science does add to our store of knowledge, but some of the knowledge leads to new products. It's the seeking that makes science what it is.

2. NEED FOR SCIENCE NEWS ON THE WEB

Scholarly journals report the results of research, but only months after the fact. Given the high and increasing costs of paper publishing, they are expensive. This puts them virtually out of reach for many individuals, and even many institutions, especially those in the less-developed nations. Even the evolution of e-journals has not solved this problem, because of their high cost. Because of the need for precision in scientific expression, the specialized journals often use words that are beyond the comprehension of most laymen, and even of scientists in fields other than their own.

The news writer is accustomed to covering complex topics quickly and expressing them in terms that are simple and understandable. Meanwhile, the Internet provides a new opportunity for science news. Huge and growing numbers of people now look there for information of all kinds, making the Internet the bulletin board of choice for any science newsletter. For a science headline or news summary, the Internet can compete with any media, even television. Electronic media makes feasible a dazzling array of innovations with the potential to transform the nature of scholarly communication.

Bits move virtually instantaneously: a news release sent by e-mail can be on any World Wide Web news page within minutes, while the regular mail release, a cumbersome collection of papers, sluggishly wends its way through the older system that transports papers from one place to another. Bits also move more cheaply than atoms, so the cost can be kept low for universities that distribute their science news releases electronically. These are the forces that come together to make a science news service on the Internet a virtual necessity.

3. MAJOR SCIENCE NEWS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Many sites in the Internet have been dedicated for science and technology news. Some of them are discussed in brief below:

3.1 Artigen Science News

Artigen science news (www.artigen.com/newswire/scitech.html) provides the headlines in science and technology collected from various websites around the world daily. The headlines are linked with the news site. Artigen, Inc maintains this page.

3.2 Alchemist

Chemweb (http://Chemweb.com/alchem/1999/homepage/hp_current.html) is an online club for the chemical community. Members may take advantage of a library of full-text journals and a collection of searchable chemical databases. It also features a weekly chemistry magazine - The Alchemist - containing news, reviews and comment. Membership of the club is free, and members can search the whole of ChemWeb.com without charge. Payment or subscription may be required, however, in order to view full-text articles from some publishers

3.3 Eurekaalert

EurekaAlert! (www.eurekaalert.org) is a comprehensive news server for up-to-date research in science, medicine, and engineering. We can find the latest advances in cancer treatments, gene mapping, global warming, or space probes. An average of 20 news releases are posted each day by 1993 registered reporters from 863 news media organizations worldwide, 963 registered Public Interest Organizations, 290 contributing institutions. EurekaAlert! is produced by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), with technical support provided by the Stanford University.

3.4 Exotica magazine

Exotica magazine (www.exoticamagazine.com/science.html) has a site entirely dedicated to science and technology, which contains information from various fields like paleozoology to UFOs. This site also has a very good Internet guide on science news, where it links to all the other sites which provide science and technology news. It is categorized based on the updating period, like daily, weekly, monthly. It also provides links to other popular science and technology sites.

3.5 Inscight

Inscight (www.academicpress.com/inscight) provides daily news from Academic press and Science Magazine. InSCiGHT is a joint project of AAAS' SCiENCE Magazine and ACADEMIC PRESS. The SCiENCE newsroom will produce daily news stories from the world of scientific research that will be marked up and published by ACADEMIC PRESS on its APNET Website.

3.6 New Scientist

New Scientist (www.newscientist.com) is the online version of the printed magazine New Scientist, which is a weekly magazine which covers the various aspects of science. Some of the articles are available online and all the articles will be available only in the print form. Insight has a special web only feature that links to the events and news from its archives.

3.7 News Wise

Newswise (www.newswise.com) is an independent business begun in 1991 by Roger Johnson, Ph.D., a biochemist who became a science writer and freelance reporter in the Washington, DC area in 1978. A searchable database of news releases from US-based top institutions engaged in scientific, medical and biomedical research. The major sections in this site are Scinews, Mednews, Biznews and Lifenews. This site is mainly aimed at news reporters around the world. Newswise archives more than 3,000 science news stories, and each is full-text searchable.

3.8 Physics News update

Physics News update (www.hep.net/documents/newsletters/pnu/pnu.html#RECENT) is the American Institute of Physics' Physics News Update Newsletter. The Physics News Update newsletter is electronically published biweekly by Phillip F. Schewe of the Physics Publication Information Department. The content is technically oriented, what's new in the field. It also has the archives starting from the year 1990.

3.9 Reuters Medical News

Reuters Medical News (publish.reutershealth.com/frame_mednews.html) is a comprehensive daily news service for medical professionals, covers the most important news in health and medicine each business day. To assist health professionals in easily identifying articles most pertinent to their interests, 30 to 50 stories are organized into 17 categories, including clinical, economic, epidemiology, ethical, legislative, legal, managed care, media, human interest, pharmaceutical, policy, political, public health, professional development, regulatory and basic science. Advanced searching capabilities to find the news that most interests anybody or search the archives for a retrospective information are also provided.

3.10 SciCentral

SciCentral (www.scicentral.com) is produced by SciLink, Inc. and maintained by professional scientists. SciCentral is structured as a metadirectory of science and engineering on the Web. The site provides many links to resources in all fields of science, including daily necessities such as e-mail and phone directories and lists of college and university Web pages. Every major science section has a "Specialty Gateway," with links to specific disciplines within the field. Other tools are included, too, including travel guides for the frequent-flying researcher, links to media coverage of science, and grant information on the Web. Daily links, special features, news stories, and dozens of topic-specific indexes make this a teacher's or student's dream.

3.11 ScienceDaily

ScienceDaily (www.sciencedaily.com) is a free, daily, advertising-supported online magazine that brings breaking news about the latest discoveries and hottest research projects in everything from astrophysics to zoology. The magazine's articles are actually news releases submitted by leading universities and other research organizations around the world. Each news release is posted in its original form, with a contact name and link to the organization's home page. Readers can also browse and participate in more than 200 science newsgroups, which offer lively discussions on various topics. And readers can subscribe to free weekly e-mail bulletins that summarize the top science news stories of the past week.

3.12 Science in the headlines

Science in the headlines (www.nas.edu/headlines) provides a summary of issues in the news with links to related reports written by volunteer committees of the nation's top experts. Each year, the National Research Council (operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Engineering) and the Institute of Medicine produce hundreds of reports that examine a range of issues from AIDS to obesity to science education, nuclear waste, and more.

3.13 Science update

Science update (<http://www.accessexcellence.com/WN/SU/>) is a site that provides weekly updates on biology from laboratories around the world. It also maintains the archives of the previous updates. Whenever a link is clicked, the complete article is displayed on the desktop. It also provides a search engine to search the contents.

3.14 Techserver

Techserver (www.techserver.com/) is a news update service in the field of technology maintained by Nando media. This is updated every minute. News services are also available for various other disciplines like sports, business, nature, politics etc.

3.15 Unisci

Unisci (www.unisci.com) is a site that reports about the research activities underway right now in American universities. They also maintain special archives on Prostate Gland and Polio vaccinations, which could be searched, and which are updated regularly. The main concentration is news on cancer and other ailments like Alzheimer's disease. A link to the news items appeared over the last five days is also maintained, so that any person who has not seen the site for a period of five days can browse through it instead of going through the whole archive.

4. OTHER NEWS SITES

Some of the other sites which also provide science and technology news are listed below.

BBC - Sci/Tech News (news.bbc.co.uk:80/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm)

CNET CENTRAL (www.news.com/?ctb.news)

CNet: Desk Top News (www.news.com/pages/top20.html)

EXCITE:SCI-TECH NEWS.TRACKER (nt.excite.com/162/page.htm)

EXN!News (www.exn.net/news)

FOX NEWS: (www.foxnews.com/science/index.sml)

Infotech-Technology News (www.artigen.com/newswire/infotech.html)

InfoWorld Electric Page (www.infoworld.com: 80)

LA Times Science (www.latimes.com/news/science/science)

MSNBC SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY (www.msnbc.com/news/TECH_Front.asp?a)

ABC NEWS: Sci/Tech (abcnews.com/sections/science)

Nando: Health & Science News (www.nandotimes.com/healthscience)
Today@NASA (www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/NewsRoom/today.html)
USAToday-CyberTech (www.usatoday.com:80/life/cyber/tech/ct000.htm)
Wired News (<http://www.wired.com/news/technology/0,1282,,00.html>)
ZDN.News (www5.zdnet.com/zdm)

5. CONCLUSION

Internet has become a very important and indispensable tool of communication all around the world. Newspapers, Journals, articles, etc. which were available only in print form once upon a time are now available right on the desktop, the moment the news has been released. So this technology has tremendously reduced the time lag between the production of information and the actual usage of it.

6. REFERENCES

1. BATES(Mary Ellen), "How to implement electronic subscriptions", Online, May 1998. <http://www.onlineinc.com/onlinemag/OL1998/bates5.html>.
2. UNISCI: <http://www.unisci.com>