

AAPSE Web Services and e-Journal Report – 2001 AAPSE Annual Meeting

The AAPSE web site (<http://aapse.ext.vt.edu>) is in its sixth year and has grown from a curiosity to a vital tool for the organization. The home page has gone through a transition from its first generation in 1995 to its present form. It is due for another major update, which will seek to give it a more "elegant" appearance, yet maintain its functional ability for all users. That "third generation" page is under development.

AAPSE Web user statistics were recently compiled for the period Mar 14 2000 to May 22 2001. The report indicated that there were 135,788 page requests. This translated to 32,984 visits to 50,364 pages, 11,133 unique visitors, and 2,408 repeat visitors with an average visit length of 1:20 minutes. Visitors originated from the following domains and countries (in order of use (most to least)): US Commercial, US Educational, Network, USA, US Government, Canada, United Kingdom, US Organization, Australia, US Military, Japan, Italy, France, Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Singapore, Malaysia, Germany, Argentina, Greece, Advanced Project Research Agency, Denmark, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, Poland, Norway, Israel, Netherlands, Thailand, New Zealand, India, Chile, Colombia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Turkey, Jordan. The most active user domains (in order of use of the site) were: .vt.edu, .aol.com, .inktomi.com, .umn.edu, .googlebot.com, .uu.net, .epa.gov, .wsu.edu, .home.com, .northernlight.com, .dec.com, .av.com, .ohio-state.edu, .fl.us, .rr.com, inktomisearch.com, .excite.com, .orst.edu, .co.uk, .ncsu.edu, .ucdavis.edu, .hawaii.edu, .gtei.net, .att.net, .tamu.edu, .msu.edu, .umd.edu, .uiuc.edu, .mediaone.net, .alexa.com, .splitrock.net, .mindspring.com, ca.us, .umass.edu, .nodak.edu, .unl.edu, .zyan.com, .level3.net, .purdue.edu.

With growth of the organization, we are due for some major changes. Parts of the web site are databases holding our membership directory, calendar, and several other services. At present, these services are maintained by the Webmaster and the Treasurer. We need to set a procedure for these updates, assign them to a committee, and post instructions for members on the web site.

We need to move to a new server and we need to establish an ".org" address. We need to put some support funds into this activity if we are to seriously continue it. This has never happened, even though the AAPSE Board has recommended this action on several occasions. A budget of \$2,000 - \$4,000 annually is the minimum budget that should be dedicated to maintenance and subscription services. Virginia Tech Pesticide Programs will continue to support the server (a cost that far surpasses these budgets. At this time it is not feasible (or is it necessary) to seek a commercial server site without stressing the AAPSE budget). In addition, several of the present services would require major reprogramming to move to a different server.

Over the past five years, several individual members have requested that the Webmaster significantly change the AAPSE web site to accommodate a project they were working on or a publication they felt should have prominent visibility on the home page. Some of these projects entailed the use of significant programming resources to convert databases or documents for use on the AAPSE web site. Unfortunately, these individuals did not consider the cost to AAPSE for long-term maintenance of these projects or compatibility with the server software. In several cases, these projects would duplicate present services or require that AAPSE link to another site for a major portion of its services.

Maintenance of these products is a long-term problem. Conversion can also be very time consuming and costly. In addition, linking to projects at another site is not recommended if they are presented as an alternative to a portion or all of the AAPSE web site. Links are not an issue here – fragmenting the service is the issue. The AAPSE web site needs to be held on one server at one site to prevent future conflicts between institutions, individuals and servers. The long-term philosophy here is to maintain a service available to all AAPSE members for the good of the organization. Decisions of this sort should not be made by one individual (including the AAPSE Webmaster), but must be made in agreement with the AAPSE Board or a designated committee(s). The Webmaster must be given a certain amount of authority, but guidelines do need to be set to protect AAPSE.

The AAPSE listserv is another important service offered to AAPSE members. The service has come under attack in the past by individuals seeking to use the service without joining AAPSE. We have not allowed access to the listserv without an active membership. This policy is in line with the Board's wishes. This is

critical since maintenance of this list has grown as the membership has grown. Over the past two years the list has grown from under 60 members to over 160 members. Adding non-members would create a major maintenance problem. Members are encouraged to notify the AAPSE Treasurer, Webmaster, and Membership Committee when their e-mail and address changes. In the past, some individuals expected AAPSE to pick up this information on its own – this can't work with the increased membership. When renewing AAPSE membership, members must provide accurate address/e-mail information.

During the past two years, Universities in particular, have tightened security on e-mail servers. Listservers are especially vulnerable and security services built around the AAPSE listserv have caused some mail to be rejected when members tried to send mail to the server. If a user's mail service allows open access (unsecured access), their e-mail might be rejected. If users get a message of this type, they must ask their mail service to correct this security problem. If not, they may not be able to mail to the list. They will continue to receive mail, however. The reason for these changes is that hackers use mail servers, and especially lists, to bounce messages, including those containing viruses, to multiple users. This also contributes to denial of service hacking. A serious denial of service incident shutdown the EPA web and mail servers in January 2000. Similar attacks have hit educational institutions, commercial, and government sites. If you have questions about this issue, contact Mike Weaver (mweaver@vt.edu).

The Journal of Pesticide Safety Education survived its second year. We published three articles and rejected one article in 1999. In 2000, we published two articles and rejected one article. We have a third article pending and it will be put into the 2000 volume to reach that "three article" threshold set in 1999. The final formatting is being completed on that article at this time and it will be added to the server very soon.

A revised set of author and reviewer criteria were sent to the Editorial Board in February. We are revisiting those criteria this week (at the National PAT Workshop). We also asked editors to confirm their interest in remaining on the Board. Three members replied to this request. We could replace several Editors based on procedures set during establishment of the Board in 1998. That procedure called for replacing the Editorial Board every three years. If anyone is interested in serving on the Editorial Board, contact Mike Weaver (mweaver@vt.edu). This will be discussed when the Editorial Board meets this week. As in the past, we encourage AAPSE members to submit articles. We have none yet in 2001. I will also be seeking to appoint an Associate Editor to assist with the editing process. This appointment will be made after the results of the AAPSE election are known.

To summarize my recommendations, they are as follows:

1. Establish a procedure for AAPSE membership database maintenance to the membership committee – this can be done with a password via the web. They may also consider taking on or sharing the ListServ maintenance if they feel this does not overload the committee.
2. Give access to one member per region, EPA-HQ, USDA/AMS, and USDA/CSREES, to post events on the AAPSE calendar server pertinent to their meetings, events, and activities of importance to AAPSE.
3. Provide adequate funding (minimum costs are \$2,000-\$4,000/year) to support web site maintenance and to fund a ".org" address for the site. The new address would be "www.aapse.org." We could then alter our publications, letterhead and announcements to reflect this change. Cost of maintaining this address is a \$35/year subscription fee. Multiple years and various services can reduce this annual fee.
4. Set a policy to basically protect the Webmaster from individuals seeking to change the AAPSE web site format, location, and services, commercialize the site, or dictate new policy. Developing a set of guidelines (or acceptable use policy) for all electronic services used by AAPSE would also be a wise decision. This includes use of the listserv, web, and e-Journal.
5. Appoint or reappoint Editorial Board members, revise criteria, and appoint an Associate Editor for the Journal of Pesticide Safety Education.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Weaver, 06/12/01.