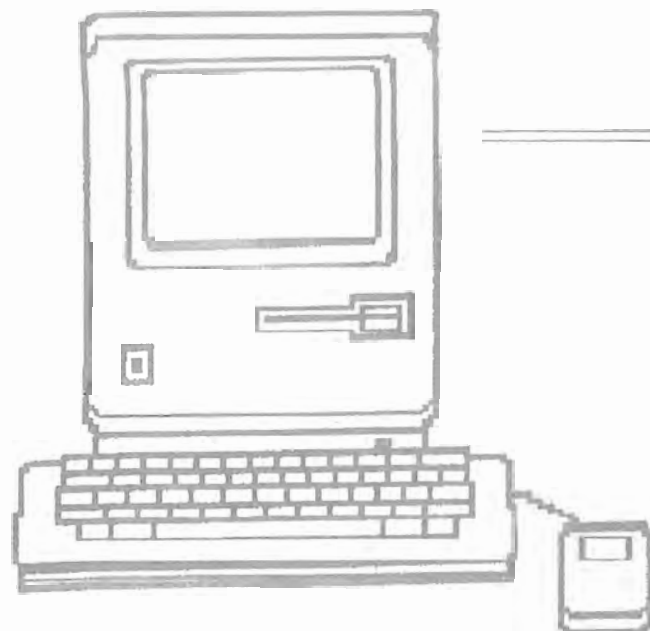


ONLINE RESOURCES FOR THE ZOO PROFESSIONAL

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Information is important in every field, but in ours it can be vital. Lately, a new and powerful source of information has evolved in the form of online resources. Online resources are those which are accessible through the use of a computer to log into a network. The most common networks available are the Internet, commercial services (ex: American Online), and private bulletin boards.

News of online resources has inundated the media. The public is coming to realize that online resources can be a valuable tool for communication, information retrieval, and business. What does this new technology mean for zoos? Right now, online resources can provide immediate links from zoo to zoo and to other relevant organizations and institutions. Thousands of links already exist, not only to animal related information, but also to information on education, fund raising, business, horticulture, architecture... the list goes on. The future promises to bring advances in access, resources, and availability.

THE INTERNET

The network that the public, researchers, and the media have been focusing on is the Internet. The Internet began as one network in 1969. In the late 80's, cooperation between the United States Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation, led to the formation of the backbone of today's Internet. The name "internet" was originally used to refer to any computer network system. Today it refers to the network, the largest network of them all - containing more than 10,000 smaller networks across the globe on all seven continents. At last count, 146 countries had access to the Internet with Africa being the least wired part of the world. Currently more than 10 million people use the Internet in some fashion, usually through electronic mail (e-mail), which is the most common form of Net access. The number of Net users is expected to increase to 100 million by the end of the century!

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Following are some of the more commonly used resources with examples of information found through each that could be of use to zookeepers.

Internet Sources

Electronic mail (e-mail) offers access to the single greatest resource on the Internet: people. E-mail works very much like regular mail, although much faster. In addition to correspondence, it is also possible to do searches, and send and receive sounds, images, and executable programs. Mailing lists and Listserve groups, available through e-mail, redistribute mail to all their subscribers and serve as a way to reach a few, or a few thousand people who are interested in a specific topic. Two examples of Listserve groups available through e-mail are:

-CONSLINK (listserv@sivm.si.edu) - run by the Smithsonian Institution's Conservation and Research Center. It covers all aspects of biological conservation.
CAMEL-L (listserv@sakfu00.bitnet@vtvml.cc.vt.edu) - run by the Camel Research Center at King Faisal, Saudi Arabia. It covers the field of camel research and study.

Usenet Newsgroups serve as virtual forums for the electronic community. The forums are divided into 20 major hierarchies or varied areas of interest. Users post messages to a newsgroup, which is then forwarded to all subscribers of that newsgroup. In January of 1994, there were 7,000 newsgroups with 20-30 being added every week. Some examples of Usenet Newsgroups are:

-clari.news.interest.animals - contains recent stories of animals in the news.
-sci.bio.herp - covers discussion on the biology of reptiles and amphibians.

Gopher is a tool that allows access into remote computers permitting browsing and searching of collections of documents. Gopher can also provide links to databases. Two gopher resources are:

- The Primate Information Network (uakari.primat.wisc.edu) - maintained by the Wisconsin Regional Primate Center. It offers primate based information including taxonomy, audio-visual resources, bibliographies, and Primate Talk, a discussion forum for primatologists.

- NETVET (vetinfo.wustl.edu) - contains veterinary information including journals, conference proceedings, lists of organizations, and animal resources.

Animal Curator, Austin Zoo, Austin, TX. Reprinted from *Animal Keepers' Forum*, Vol. 23, No. 5, 1996.

The World-Wide-Web (WWW) is a system for organizing, linking, and providing easy access to related Internet files, resources, and services. When reading documents in the Web, it is possible to click on highlighted words or phrases to jump to definitions, other sources, and related documents anywhere in the world. Some resources on the web are:

- DeerNet(<http://cervid.forsci.ualberta.ca/deernet/deernet.html>)- contains links to the electronic journal Cervus and worldwide ungulate research stations, as well as pictures of the world's ungulates.
- The Penguin Page (<http://www.vni.net/~kwelch/penguins.shtml>) - contains information on penguin behavior, reproduction, and predators.
- ZooNet (<http://www.mindspring.com/~zoonet/>)-includes zoo news, links to zoo pages, and lots of animal links.
- Electronic Zoo (<http://netvet.wustl.edu/e-zoo.html>) - this is probably the most comprehensive list of animal related computer resources.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a tool used to move files from one computer to another. Text files, pictures, sound files, and programs can all be accessed through FTP. Many university departments have information available in FTP files.

Other Online sources

Commercial Providers such as CompuServe and American Online are large computer systems that offer a variety of services that now include Internet and database access.

-CompuServe offers access to the Life Sciences Collection database.

-America Online offers the Pet Care Forum which includes two discussion groups for zookeepers.

Bulletin Boards (BBS) are small dial-up systems designed for local users, although many are now available over public networks. Some BBS provide conferencing capabilities. Most are very specialized, dealing with one particular topic. An example of Bulletin Board is the:

-Enviro BBS (703-524-1837) - which holds discussions about environmental protection, wildlife, endangered species, and natural resources.

Online Libraries are available through Internet, commercial providers, and subscription. Most only provide bibliographic record searches, not the full contents of the books. Some offer access to online journals, searchable databases, and Internet assistance. The majority of large universities have their entire library catalog systems available online. An example of an online library is the:

-Illinet Online Catalog (<telnet-illinet.aiss.uiuc.edu>) which contains 40 Illinois libraries, including the entire Chicago public library system and almost every Illinois University library. In addition, over 800 other libraries may be accessed from Illinet.

The future of online resources promises to be exciting. Their potential is just beginning to be realized. Already, the amount of information available is overwhelming. Imagine what 100 million users will provide! The tools for online searching are still in the development stages, and so too are the sources themselves. Both the United States Congress, and the business community want to develop and fund the National Information Highway (NIH). This means that in the future, Internet and online access will be as widespread as telephone access. It is impossible to know at this time how this new technology will affect our field. The most obvious changes that will be seen are more users, more sites, and more services. This should mean better channels of communication, increased information, and more ideas. Utilization of these resources will benefit ourselves as professionals, our field, and our animals.

Note - Due to the ever changing nature of electronic resources, the addresses/ phone numbers for those mentioned above may have changed since this paper was written.

Animal Keepers' Forum Editor's Note: The following is an additional list of sites you might like to visit on the World Wide Web. This list, in part, was provided to the AZA Communique by L. H. Baptista. Other sites were added by this office.

1. AAZK: <http://aazk.ind.net/>
2. C.A.U.Z.: <gopher://gopher.vax.csun.edu>
3. Zoo and Animal Park Legislation: <gopher://gopher.legislate.com:7005/>
4. New Orleans Zoo: <http://www.swiss.ai.mit.edu/phil/summer94/new-orleans-zoo.html>
5. Sea World/Busch Gardens: <http://www.bev.net/education/Sea World/homepage.html>
6. Seneca Park Zoo: <http://www.eznet.net/rochester/todo/sights/zoo/zoo.html>
7. Stephen Birch Aquarium - Museum: <http://aqua.ucsd.edu/>
8. Zoo Atlanta: <http://www.gatech.edu/3020/zoo/home-page.html>
9. Indianapolis: <http://www.biology.iupui.edu/indyzoo/>
10. National Zoo: <gopher://gopher.american.edu/dc/zoo>
11. Brazilian Zoos Census: <http://www.ftpt.br/cgi-bin/bdnet/zooplantel>
12. AZA: <http://www.AZA.ORG> (offers access to individual AZA institution Web Pages)
13. Orangutan Foundation International: <http://www.ns.net/orangutan>
14. San Diego Zoo: <http://www.sandiegozoo.org>
15. Defenders of Wildlife: <http://www.defenders.org>
16. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: <http://www.fws.gov/>