

VIRTUAL CENTER March 1996 Volume I Issue #4 UPDATE

The Monthly Newsletter of The Virtual Center Online System on The World Wide Web

The Virtual Center - World Wide Web: "<http://www.virtualcenter.com>" - Electronic Mail: "vcinfo@virtualcenter.com"

Access Encyclopedia Britannica on the 'net!

As the Internet continues to grow in popularity, more and more useful tools are finding their way on the World Wide Web.

For years, users could search electronic versions of encyclopedias on commercial online information services. Now, users of the Internet can do the same.

Currently, one of the most popular encyclopedias available is now on the Internet. Encyclopedia Britannica (<http://www.eb.com>)

now offers its wealth of knowledge in a searchable electronic edition. By entering the site online, users can enter search terms and view full text articles from the encyclopedia.

Although the site is fee based and subscriptions are required for users, the site offers a seven day free trial to allow users the ability to try out the site at no charge. After that, a subscription fee

is required.

One of the few problems with the site is its trial period. It can take a while before the registration process is complete. Your user I.D. is sent via e-mail and that could take a day or two. Otherwise, the site is very thorough and can provide a great resource for students and parents and anyone interested in furthering their knowledge.



Yet Another Search Database?

Excite hopes to offer a new approach to finding just the right site.

It seems there are more search database sites on the Internet than there are sites to search for. Well, in comes another entry into the very competitive search race.

Excite (<http://www.excite.com/>) offers a different approach to searching for sites on the web. Although you do enter keywords to search for, the site also has the capabilities of searching based on concept keywords. In other words, even though it may find an entry that doesn't exactly match your keywords word for word, it may find that it does contain similar aspects that you might be interested in. For instance, if you are looking for comedy on the net, your search word might be "comedy" but it might also find sites relating to "comics", "cartoons", or "sit-coms". That feature alone makes using Excite rather easy.

Excite uses its own proprietary search engine to do the job and even makes that search engine available to other sites. As a matter of fact, version 1.0 of their search engine is available free of charge for use on your own web server. Sim-



ply download the version for your server and set it up. Then, in about an hour, as much as 300 megs of information on your server can be cataloged for searching. If you run a large server with varied amounts of information, it can be quite handy for users of your site to be able to search for information on your site rather than be forced to hunt around the millions of links on your server to find it.

Although there are many search sites on the web, Excite does make a good attempt to provide a new approach to finding sites on the net and can make it much easier finding just the right information or site you're looking for quickly and easily!



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New entertainment service debuts on the Internet

Although there are a lot of entertainment sites on the web, they seem to be offering much of the same information. Many of them are mostly industry related sites such as news or studio sites. But there's a new service on the web that brings all of that information together, and even allows users to discuss entertainment as well.

E-Quest (short for Entertainment Quest -

<http://www.virtualcenter.com/equest/>) offers a variety of entertainment information in one place. The site is broken up into Comedy, Film, and Television (a music category is in the works) so you can easily find just what your looking for.

In the "Links" section of each category, you can easily find other related sites on the net including sites such as entertainment magazines, movie studios, networks, and more.

In the "Chat" section of each category are a variety of discussion topics. Users can read, post, and reply in topics ranging from Action Films to Sit-Coms. Each category has its own variety of discussion topics. In the comedy category, you can even read and post your favorite jokes!

In the "News" section of each category are a list of news topics. Some topics are generated by E-Quest while links are available to other sites for additional news. Every Tuesday, E-Quest posts the latest box office scores so you can see how your favorite movie did at the box office during the pre-

vious weekend. And right now, the entire list of Oscar nominees are available online in the Movies section.

E-Quest also just opened up an interactive chat system that is available from the main menu where users can enter different rooms and chat with each other instantly on a variety of topics. Plus, E-Quest has plans for an expanded Oscar



section in the Movies category which will allow users the ability to vote for who they think should win the various awards.

You can even be your own movie or television critic. Both the Movies and Television categories play host to "Reviews" where users can write their own reviews of current movies or television shows for others to read. The latest reviews are listed while all reviews can be searched in the reviews database. And the staff at E-Quest frequently scans those reviews and periodically will award free tickets to local United Artist theaters to winning critics.

E-Quest has big plans and already seems to be on a good start. One word of warning, though. The system is brand new so don't expect to find hundreds of messages in the various discussion groups. They do, however, encourage that people go ahead and post to the groups as that's the only way the discussion groups will grow!

Chat rooms arrive at The Virtual Center

After months of planning and many requests from users, The Virtual Center (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/chat/>) now offers interactive chat rooms. Now, users can enter different chat rooms and talk instantly with other users. As the chat rooms grow in popularity, the service plans to open up new rooms in the future.

The new system makes use of probably one of the most advanced chatting systems available. The new system doesn't rely on old techniques that require the user constantly reload their web browser to refresh the messages. Instead, it uses something called "Server Push" techniques in which the server actually keeps the line open and as new messages are received by users, the messages are automatically sent to your web browser and immediately displayed. As the screen fills up, the user simply scrolls down the page.

The same system will be available in other areas of The Virtual Center including the interactive chat rooms in E-Quest (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/equest/>).

The chat rooms are brand new so don't be surprised if there aren't many people. But as word gets out, more and more people will be finding a home in the Virtual Center chat rooms.

But the service doesn't plan to stop there. They're already in the works to update and expand the system to allow features such as "auditoriums" where online forums can be hosted. A moderator will lead the discussion. If you would like to host a forum you can simply e-mail your request to them at vcsales@virtualcenter.com and your forum can be placed on the schedule and promoted online.

Another feature that will be added in the coming months will give users the ability to create their own private chat rooms. By using a password system, only those you invite can enter your room.

If you haven't done so, you might want to stop by the chat rooms and invite people to chat. It could be the most addictive place on the net!

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Looking for a few good laughs?

The Internet hosts many great sites for comedy.

There's a growing list of sites available for comedy lovers these days on the Internet. A simple search in the many search databases on the web will show comedy sites for all types of comedy lovers. Whether you're looking for comedy clubs or sites for your favorite comedy shows, the Internet is becoming a comedy lover's dream.

The Comedy Central (<http://www.comcentral.com>) cable network has a site where you can preview many of their shows, get a program schedule, and more. Plus, there's a long list of QuickTime movies of many of their shows you can download. One particularly good thing about the site is its selection of QuickTime movies of classic clips from old Saturday Night Live episodes dating back to some of the very first episodes.

Comedy Central offers quite a menu for comedy lovers.

The Comedy Page (<http://comedypage.com>) offers a list of links to various comedy sites on the web as well as a list of comedy clubs around the country and information about many different stand-up comics.

E-Quest (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/equest/>)



The Comedy Page

also offers a list of comedy sites in the links section. This new entertainment service also has discussion groups including a jokes section where users can post some of their favorite jokes for others to enjoy. The television and film sections also have topics in the discussion groups relating to sit-coms, comedy films, and more. Plus, E-Quest offers a list of sites for shows, studios, and networks on the web where you can find out more about your favorite comedy stars and shows. Those links can be found in the television and film sections.

You'll find some of your favorite comedy shows from television on the web as well. For a while now both David Letterman and Jay Leno have had sites. On Letterman's site, you can view the latest top ten lists and all of the past top ten lists from Dave's time on CBS are available as well. Leno's site sports a joke of the day and video clips you can download of his monologue. Both sites give information on upcoming guests on the show.

By far, the Internet is getting swamped with new material every day for comedy lovers. It's always helpful to make a quick stop by Yahoo! or Lycos or another search engine to find everything from cartoons to comedy clubs, and more.

The Virtual MarketPlace welcomes two new businesses

The Virtual MarketPlace (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/marketplace/>) is growing again. New businesses to



Global Encountours offers adventure travel packages including a writers tour to exotic Peru.

the MarketPlace include Global Encountours (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/encountours/>), which offers exciting adventure packages. Right now, Global Encountours is offering a traveling writers workshop to Peru. Their site includes a complete itinerary of the trip, pictures of previous trips, and a form if you want to request additional information or send them e-mail.

Also new to the MarketPlace is Excel Telecommunications (<http://www.virtualcenter.com/excel/>). Excel,

the fourth largest long distance service in the country, offers low long distance plans including plans for small businesses and international calling plus very affordable personal 800 service which allows you to have your very own 800 number. The company also provides an easy, affordable way for people to set up their own small business selling their long distance service. Agents who sell long distance service actually receive a portion of every dollar spent on long distance by the people they sign up. Check their site for more information or send them e-mail online using the online order form.

If you have a service or business that you would like

to see in The Virtual MarketPlace, select "Add Your Store" from the MarketPlace main menu for more information and an order form. If you don't currently have an internet site, the MarketPlace will provide one for you.

Prices start at just \$50 per month and anyone in the MarketPlace gets special discounts on all online advertising including billboard space in The Virtual Center and all of its available services. Check The Virtual MarketPlace online for more information or send e-mail to "vcsales@virtualcenter.com" for details.



Excel Telecommunications not only offers great long distance plans, but the ability to sell the services to others as a small business opportunity.

Keep track of the number of visitors to your site

Now, more and more individuals are getting their own personal home pages on the World Wide Web. But many want the ability to know how many people are visiting their site. That's also a company need for businesses who want to know how many people are actually visiting their site.

Counters have always been a popular way of achieving this but many times, they don't always work. For one reason, it counts every time somebody tries to access their page. The problem is if the same user requests the page over and over again, it keeps updating the counter and doesn't give a clear picture to the person keeping count of his or her own site. Plus, most people with personal home pages don't have the ability to add cgi programs to their web server and most counters require that feature.



Internet Audit Bureau

Well, now there's a company that will keep track of your site for you. The Internet Audit Bureau (<http://www.internet-audit.com>) will keep a count of visitors to your site and give you updated reports with exact daily, weekly, and monthly counts and daily, weekly, and monthly averages.

Plus, the Internet Audit Bureau uses a special way of detecting individual users so even if users constantly reload the page, it won't update the counter, giving the page's owner a more precise count of actual users.

The best part about their service is that it is available at no charge. You can request a free account with the Internet Audit Bureau and begin allowing them to count your pages immediately.



Many people, probably even you, have found themselves in an unstable working environment. There are no guarantees anymore that you will have your job five years from now. But many people are taking matters into their own hands. They're starting their own business. It is truly the only way to gain full success and satisfaction. And it's the only way to attain unlimited income potential.

Excel Telecommunications knows that. We've helped thousands reach their goals of success by selling long distance services and bringing this great opportunity to others. And their success has made us the fourth largest long distance company in the nation.

For more information call (214) 224-6126. Visit our web site at "<http://www.virtualcenter.com/excel>" or e-mail us at "jmhall@virtualcenter.com".

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If you are tired of not knowing your future and you want the freedom of knowing you can achieve anything, experience the freedom of Excel Telecommunications. By becoming an independent representative, you can enjoy the possibilities of attaining your dreams. It's the freedom of success. Experience the freedom today!

For more information about becoming an independent representative, call us at (214) 224-6126 and let us show you how you can take hold of your future. Or visit our web site at "<http://www.virtualcenter.com/excel>" for detailed information. You'll see a brighter future in no time.

COMING NEXT MONTH....

**NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR 2.0 WITH SUN'S JAVA SUPPORT
HOW TO ADD INTERACTIVENESS TO YOUR WEB SITE VIA CGI**