



The Nobel e-Museum

Who was awarded the first ever Nobel prize? Or last year's? Isn't this year the Centennial of the Nobel prize? Who is Otto Wallach and when did Konrad Bloch, who died in 2000, receive the prize?

The answers to these questions and more can be found at the official web site of the Nobel Foundation at www.nobel.se. The entry page elegantly directs the surfer to the information he

or she is looking for. It displays current events such as the year 2000 Prize winners, pictures and transcripts of the ceremonies, and even leads you to a web camera that shows pictures of the Nobel Banquet for those not lucky enough to attend.

In the historic part of the site—called the Nobel e-Museum—you can also find out about the history of the Nobel prize itself: not only the founder Alfred Nobel, the foundation statutes, diploma and medal artists but also stamps. Find out how much the prize amount has changed over the years. If you wish, you can even search Alfred Nobel's private library or take a virtual tour of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

For chemistry, physics, and literature, there is a review of the last century's development in that prize category. The amount of information on individual prize winners varies. For the most recent years, there is everything: biography, scientific information, diploma, medal, stamps, interviews, videos of the ceremony and so on. By the use of icons, the list of laureates reveals which type information can be retrieved (Figure 1).

To access this information, though, you have to go to the prize winners' page first. The icons are not hyperlinks unfortunately. The biographies in the Nobel archive also vary enormously: the Curies' (mostly two time prize winner Marie Curie's) is four times as long as J. van't Hoff's or J.-M. Lehn's biography.

Scientific information is present, but not very profound—you would do better to read the Nobel lectures in *Angewandte Chemie* for that purpose. In many cases, it is hidden in the press releases and further reading sections. At least for the recent prize winners, there are links to their respective home pages on the web. Other links to the outside world are, unfortunately, scarce by policy of the site maintainers.

How many Japanese scientists have won the Nobel prize? What did the Nobel stamps look like in 1974? You can find the answers to these questions through the search engines on the Nobel site.

For the Centennial of the Nobel prize, there will be a special exhibition in the Stockholm stock exchange from April to August 2001. More information can be found in the e-Museum.

The design of the site is classic and very elegant, not at all fancy but almost solemn (Lagom är bra in Swedish, I was told). The user easily finds what he or she can expect to find either by browsing or with the search facilities. Graphical elements come in a minimum, so loading times are reasonably short even via a modem. Unless technically inevitable for videos and virtual tours, there is no need for plug-ins. The scientific information may not always be very profound but there is often a hint for further reading. Anyway, achievements by people such as Svante Arrhenius, Emil Fischer and Victor Grignard are found in textbooks nowadays.

Since there is no Nobel Web Prize, the site cannot be nominated. But it is well worth a visit.

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Figure 1. Nobel Laureates in Chemistry

For further information visit

www.nobel.se
or contact
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