



Looking for Alternatives

“Green chemistry (GC) is the utilization of a set of principles that reduces or eliminates the use or generation of hazardous substances in the design, manufacture, and application of chemical products.” The execution of these principles has been funded intensely in the US since 1993 by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for example by means of the Presidential GC Challenge Award. Current developments and activities should therefore be found on the internet.

Let me start with the EPA’s GC web site.^[1] I am received by a clearly designed page that first displays the Green Chemistry mission as well as six blue test tubes, which turn green when I click on them, and which lead to the information contained in the site (Figure 1).

What is green chemistry? Here, I learn that GC is a part of the EPA “Design for the Environment” program, and surf on to the programs and projects



Figure 1. Green Chemistry at the US Environmental Protection Agency.

sections to learn more about the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards. Unfortunately, only research done in the US can be honored. The extensive representation of the prize-winning projects from 1996 to 2000 is very interesting; I learn a lot about what GC really means. Unfortunately, other funding programs lack that wealth of information. In the period from 1995 to 1998, 82 GC projects were funded with a total of over 24 million dollars. The site would be a lot more lively if you were not just presented with variations of the mission, but actual research or student projects instead.

Even the events calendar is starving: with one exception, all the conferences announced were over at the time of writing. Apparently, the last update was in the spring.

I use the link to the Green Chemistry Institute (GCI) and arrive at the ACS’s Chemistry portal (Figure 2).^[2]



Figure 2. ACS Green Chemistry site.

The GCI is a nonprofit institution established in 1997 that is supposed to facilitate cooperation between government, industry, universities and other laboratories to develop economically sustainable technology to help avoid the generation and production of hazardous wastes. Since the beginning of 2001, there has been a partnership agreement with the ACS, which dominates the web site. A link that is supposed to lead to the list of board members leads to an empty page. I once again learn a lot about the principles of GC, but hardly anything about its “real life”. The events calendar is current and comprehensive, but not sorted chronologically. There is not much content in the research section yet. I was a bit upset to find the same GC articles of little interest in the resources, education, and news sections alike. The

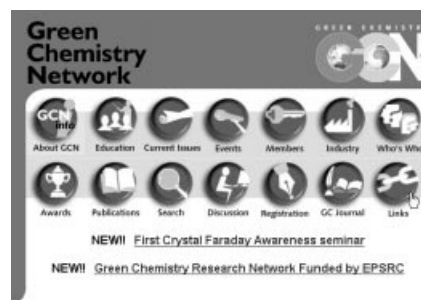


Figure 3. Royal Green Chemistry in Britain.

site was apparently set up at the beginning of 2001, but has not been updated since.

Let’s move on to the Green Chemistry Network (GCN) site of the Royal Society of Chemistry:^[3] The GCN is meant to promote GC awareness through education, training, and practical work in industry, universities, and schools. The entry page is clearly arranged and it is green (Figure 3). I have a look at the events calendar and once again find that all but one of the events listed are a thing of the past here as well. The last update

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is not mentioned anywhere; the most recent references are from the beginning of 2000. There is also an award in the UK, and the winning projects are explained in detail. To receive the newsletter, you have to register (for free), which I did a while ago. However, I have no access. Left alone with no help, I angrily give up and leave the site.

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- [1] <http://www.epa.gov/greenchemistry/index.htm>
- [2] <http://chemistry.org/portal/Chemistry?PID=acsdisplay.html&DOC=greenchemistryinstitute/index.html>
- [3] <http://www.chemsoc.org/networks/gcn/index.htm>