



And The Winner Is...

For many of us, the internet is simply the biggest source of information ever compiled, where people can easily publish their own material and access a wealth of information with almost no barriers and only a few exceptions. Others may think of the internet as a global "business district" where geographical borders and locations count less than the design of store fronts. In any event, it is quite obvious that one cannot afford to stay out or ignore the internet nowadays. But, are you in a position to take full advantage of the new media? Do you keep the same level of enthusiasm and passion to explore new sources after a few years of being connected? In fact, chances are that you no longer search for that hidden "million-dollar" piece of information when logging on. Instead, your organized list of bookmarks has probably become the single most important element on your web browser. Do you miss something? The truth is that the internet continues to grow rapidly and valuable information is added even more intensively than ever. The challenge remains—keep on all the good, new stuff and filter out noise.

Earlier this year, ChemIndustry.com, John Wiley & Sons, and the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK) decided to put a spotlight on current noteworthy web resources by setting up a contest: "Best Chemical Sites on the Web." It was open to websites and web pages of clear interest to chemists, chemical engineers, and chemical-industry professionals, in English, and free to users. Website owners, web masters, judges and the general public were invited to nominate sites from January 28 to June 27, 2002. Following initial screening, sites have been nominated in three major categories. In all, 128 eligible web sites were entered, including 19 in the "Online

Courses and Tools" category; 41 in the "Portals and Information Hubs" category, and 64 in the "Corporate Sites" category.

A 16-judge panel reviewed and independently ranked nominees within the following parameters: "Accuracy, Breath and Depth of Content", "Usefulness", and "Presentation and Ease of Use". A nominee's overall score was determined by an arithmetic average of the three parameters and by averaging all of the judges' votes. The diverse panel was comprised of distinguished editors and publishers, chemical information experts, librarians, chemists, and chemical engineers. On September 1st 2002, the organizers proudly announced the winners and honorees of the 2002 contest.

Online Courses and Tools: The winner is TORVS research team (Prof. Gasteiger, Erlangen, Germany) with its collection of interactive web-based chemical computation and visualization services (www2.chemie.uni-erlangen.de/services/, Figure 1) Category honorees are:

- The mass spectrometry course by the Institute of Organic Chemistry, University of Heidelberg (www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~bl5) and
- "An Introduction to Surface Chemistry" by Dr. Roger Nix, Department of Chemistry, Queen Mary University of London (www.chem.qmul.ac.uk/surfaces/scc).^[1]

Portals and Information Hubs: The winner is the NIST Webbook, a comprehensive database of chemical data (webbook.nist.gov).^[2] Category honorees are:

- Chemweb, chemistry community portal (www.chemweb.com)^[3]
- SpecialChem, an online service focused on polymer additives (www.specialchem.com)
- Integrated Spectral Data Base System for Organic Compounds, by the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology Tsukuba,

Ibaraki, Japan (www.aist.go.jp/RIODB/SDBS/menu-e.html)

- MatWeb, a searchable database of chemical names and properties (www.matWeb.com)
- SIS, a chemical information portal by the National Library of Medicine (chem.sis.nlm.nih.gov)
- The portal of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (www.iupac.org)
- The portal of the American Chemical Society (www.chemistry.org).

Winners in both categories receive US\$ 750 worth of books and publications from John Wiley & Sons. Honorees receive products from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Corporate Sites: The winner is Sigma–Aldrich (www.sigma-aldrich.com). Category honorees are:

- Molecular Probes (www.probes.com)
- Eastman Chemical (www.eastman.com)
- Fisher Scientific (www.fishersci.com)
- Dow Corning (www.dowcorning.com)
- EM Science (www.emscience.com)
- ACD Labs (www.acdlabs.com).

The winner receives a full-year advertising campaign with Chemindustry.com. Honorees receive three months of online campaigns.

The organizers and sponsors hope that the contest will put users on track for their online searches and look forward to the next competition. Maybe your (new?) site will be on the list by then...

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Figure 1. Online courses and tools: TORVS group.

For further information visit:

<http://www.chemindustry.com/contest/>

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