EDITOR'S MESSAGE

David Banks, Associate Editor

For those of you who have been living on a desert island for the last few years (and I guess that such a scenario is actually quite plausible for many of IAH's members!), I should explain that WWW is the World Wide Web, a global network of computer servers offering (usually) publically accessible information over the Internet. The WWW allows you to obtain information on geology departments in universities worldwide and to access the USGS, BGS, and USEPA, among other agencies. The WWW contains freely downloadable hydrogeochemical and groundwater flow models and other software. It also allows you to contact areas of the globe where normal postal communications could take several weeks. For example, several Russian organisations place information on the WWW, as do institutions in the Baltic States.

It has to be admitted that the so-called World Wide Web does contain a number of geographic "holes"; although Eastern Europe is rapidly acquiring IT access, there are still many regions not covered. Africa and South America have also been largely by-passed by the Information Superhighway, and IAH undoubtedly has a role to play in ensuring that hydrogeological and environmental organisations in these areas are assisted in making the most of such facilities as are available.

The possibilities that WWW and the Internet offer are impressive. To start using them, you will need access to a networked computer (e.g., a PC) and a piece of software known as a Web Crawler, which assists you in making connections with remote servers. Common Web Crawlers include "Mosaic" and "Netscape". In order to make full use of WWW, you also need to know where to start looking for interesting sites, and that is where IAH's home page may assist you. The IAH home page is located on a computer at the University of Sheffield, UK, and in order to access it, simply type <http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/D-H/es/iah.html> from your Web Browser. The IAH home page, in addition to containing basic information on IAH, gives a full listing of forthcoming hydrogeological meetings and is also able to display important news items. Additionally, it contains access to a wide range of "hyperlinks" to other highly useful hydrogeological sites: the USGS, USEPA, BGS, the Cambridge Virtual Coffee Pot, and various hydrogeologically active universities and sites where you can access most of the standard hydrogeological and chemical modelling packages.

This is just the start. How IAH's activity develops on the Web depends on you. If you have any other ideas on how the IAH documents may be improved or have further information that should be provided, please Email one (or all!) of the following:

Andrew Skinner on 100074.1445@compuserve.com

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If you have information about forthcoming meetings that you wish to be included in the IAH calendar, please email Robin Scott or Dave Banks (above). Questions or comments about the content of *Hydrogeology Journal* should be sent to Clifford Voss on cvoss@usgs.gov.