

The Observatory

www.osl.gc.ca

Scientific Diffusion on the Internet

Even though using the Internet has become a common task for many people, most are not familiar with certain aspects of Web site creation such as scientific diffusion and the development of specialized applications and dynamic Web pages.

Since the late 90s, the St. Lawrence Observatory (OSL) team has been dedicated to this type of development and committed to using the Internet as a means for making marine sciences accessible to a wide audience.

Web Development

On a regular basis, the OSL team works simultaneously on several projects and interacts with many different groups of scientists involved in carrying out these projects. The success of these numerous endeavours is based upon the implementation of a Web development and management process that includes continuous stages of quality control, prototype testing, system security assurance, and compliance to various standards.

The OSL process is as follows:

1. Project Architecture

Investing time and effort in the project planning phase reduces the risk of having to redo the work throughout the process. Anticipating challenges and understanding the complexity of the different development steps allow for a better estimation of the required effort and a higher capacity to meet deadlines. The collaborators' involvement in every step of this process increases their understanding of the issues and ensures a commitment to the success of the project.

- **Orientation:**
initial discussions among participants;
- **Strategy:**
project definition (objectives, clients, message, roles and responsibilities, available resources, etc.);

- **Technical Environment:**

specifications, constraints, equipment, with respect to users, data producers, and the OSL;

- **Content:**

type of content, volume, format, intellectual property, language, images, multimedia, metadata, etc.;

- **Navigation Plan:**

how users will navigate throughout the site, type of links, database accesses, security levels, etc.;

- **Estimation of required resources.**

2. Site Construction

This phase is initiated only when the plans, material, tools, and teams are clearly outlined. Prototypes are developed, reviewed, tested, and modified until all requirements are met.

- **Graphic Design:**

development of the overall visual concept of the site and various sections;

- **Programming:**

site structure and HTML page development, advanced programming (database query capabilities, dynamic applications, etc.).

3. Validation and Approval

Editorial process, peer review, and final approval.

4. Delivery and site launching

5. Evaluation

Examination of strengths, weaknesses, errors, and challenges, which will be included in the project's documentation and used in the implementation of future improvements.

6. Maintenance and Updates

Current Projects

Many of the current Web development projects will likely be completed over the next few months. Spring 2004 should bring some new additions to the OSL portal, particularly in the areas of remote sensing, marine mammal research, and experimental biology. So, stay tuned.

In Brief

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OSL Web Traffic

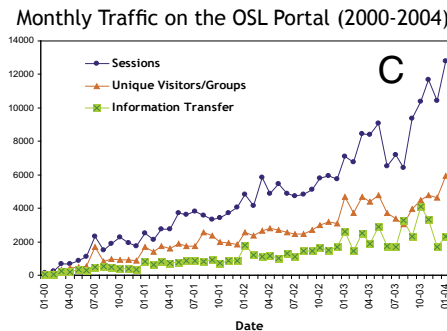
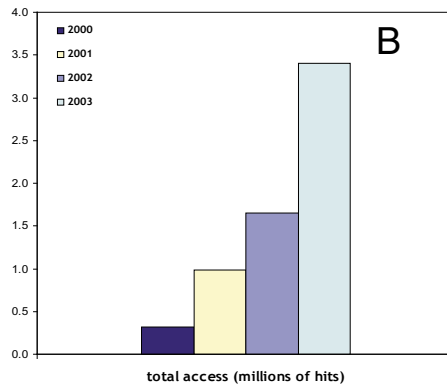
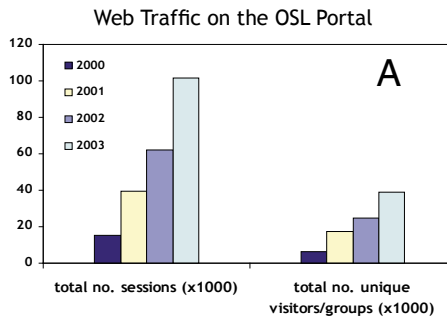
Compilations for the 2000 to 2003 period (Figures A and B) illustrate the rate of increase in Web traffic on the St. Lawrence Observatory portal.

In 2003, the total number of work sessions exceeded 100 000: nearly 40 000 unique groups of visitors generated some 3.4 million hits. Since 2000, users from 124 countries from all continents have accessed data and scientific information published on the OSL.

The OSL portal's fifth year of operation on the Internet has just started, and indicators continue to show an increase in Web traffic. Figure C shows how monthly traffic has evolved since the portal was first opened on the Internet in January 2000.

In January 2004, some 6 000 groups of unique visitors logged nearly 13 000 work sessions on the OSL; each session had an average duration of 49 minutes.

To follow traffic trends, check our statistics under "On the lookout" at www.osl.gc.ca/en/info/frequentation.html



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Aussi disponible en français

Events



Forum en sciences de la mer - 2004 Edition
The Hudson Bay Complex, 15-16 April 2004
Maurice Lamontagne Institute,
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Mont-Joli, QC
See details at www.osl.gc.ca/Forum2004

Acknowledgement

On 23 September 2003, the OSL team (past and current contributors) was honoured to be presented with the Fisheries and Oceans Canada **Assistant Deputy Minister Science Commendation** for its work in the area of scientific diffusion and for its contribution to the promotion of marine sciences. The award was presented by Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright, ADM Science.



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