Pigs in the World Wide Web

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One usually sends email (discussed in the July 1995 issue of *Swine Heath and Production*) person-to-person or group-to-person. The same network of computers (called the Internet) that makes the delivery of email possible, however, can do much more. Twelve million people regularly access the Internet, and this number is growing rapidly every day.

With such a large audience, the Internet offers a large library of information in the forms of text, graphics, and even sound and video that you can access in many ways. The most common and thorough method of reaching these resources is through the World Wide Web (WWW). It is called the 'Web' because it has a unique structure that allows subject areas to be easily interconnected. The WWW is designed for browsing. On the Web, there are hundreds of thousands of "homepages" (which are really nothing more than computer files stored on powerful computers called "servers"). The "addresses" of these homepages are really the names of the files, directories and subdirectories on the server on which the file is stored. Homepages usually include both graphics and text, and typically not only introduce the resources of that site but also provide links to related materials in other computer files housed on other servers, sometimes located on the other side of the world.

The most popular software used to access the WWW is Netscape® (the illustrations shown in this column are from Netscape® and show what a typical homepage screen looks like). Netscape® is a Windows™-based program that efficiently retrieves and manipulates text, graphics, and sounds. Programs such as Netscape® allow you to cruise or "surf" the net by clicking on a highlighted or underlined word on your screen: your computer will automatically call up that file from its respective server and display it on your screen. For instance, in the screen depicted in Figure 3, if you wanted to read the article entitled "Characterization of the Use of Artificial Insemination in the North Carolina Swine Industry," by W. L. Flowers, you would simply move your cursor to the title and click the mouse button. By clicking on the arrow keys on the toolbar, you can scroll backwards and forwards through your selections. Netscape® can also store the addresses of files that you use a lot.
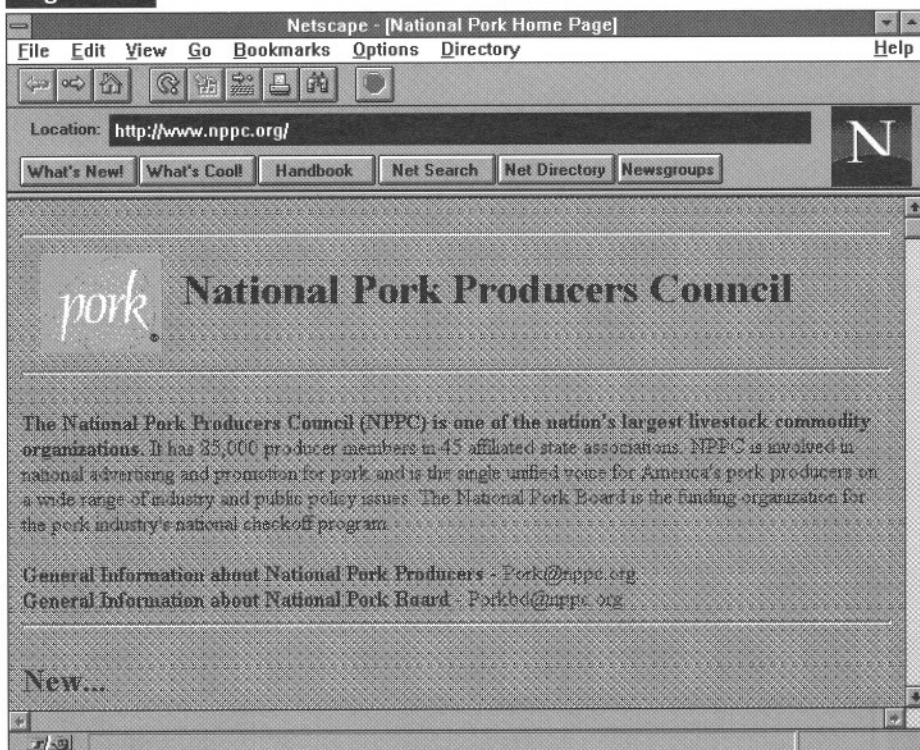
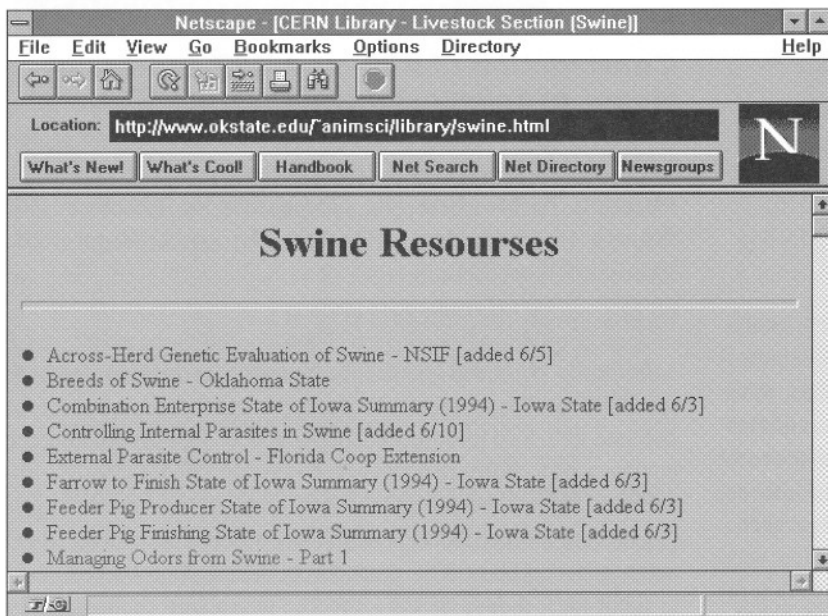Organizations such as the National Pork Producers Council <http://www.nppc.org> have created homepages and put them on the WWW (Figure 1). Educational institutions, such as Oklahoma State University, often place catalogs of on-line resources related to the swine industry on the WWW (Figure 2) <http://www.okstate.edu/~animsci/library/swine.html>. The WWW also houses various resources such as research reports <http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/project/www/ncsu/cals/an_sci/ann_rep94/swineres.html> from the Department of Animal Science at North Carolina State University <http://www.ncsu.edu> (Figure 3). Electronic publication can be more timely and cost-effective than print textbooks, magazines, or newsletters. We in the swine industry can already access technical reports, market summaries, and general news reports on the WWW.

One can gain access to the WWW through a number of access providers. Though accessing the WWW from rural locations can be costly, there are many ways to limit the expense of merging onto the information superhighway. Many access providers supply 1-800 numbers to use if local access numbers are unavailable. Though it may take many hours to access complicated graphics and sounds, most modems and telephone lines are fast enough to transfer text readily. Text still provides most of the useful information, and to save time, programs such as Netscape® can be set to receive only text. A local computer store is the best place to get individual suggestions for your region.

For veterinarians, probably the best place to start is NetVet

Figure 1

Figure 2

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Netscape - [CERN Library - Livestock Section (Swine)]
File  Edit  View  Go  Bookmarks  Options  Directory                    Help

Location: http://www.okstate.edu/~animsci/library/swine.html          N

What's New!  What's Cool!  Handbook   Net Search  Net Directory  Newsgroups
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Swine Resourses

- Across-Herd Genetic Evaluation of Swine - NSIF [added 6/5]
- Breeds of Swine - Oklahoma State
- Combination Enterprise State of Iowa Summary (1994) - Iowa State [added 6/3]
- Controlling Internal Parasites in Swine [added 6/10]
- External Parasite Control - Florida Coop Extension
- Farrow to Finish State of Iowa Summary (1994) - Iowa State [added 6/3]
- Feeder Pig Producer State of Iowa Summary (1994) - Iowa State [added 6/3]
- Feeder Pig Finishing State of Iowa Summary (1994) - Iowa State [added 6/3]
- Managing Odors from Swine - Part 1

<http://netvet.wustl.edu/>, a homepage set up by Dr. Ken Boschert. Sections on different species (including swine) are listed on this resource. One final warning: as you follow the web out to other areas, you may find that the WWW can be addictive. Newspapers, sports pages, college newsletters, and comics are just some of the other items to view. The preponderance of information has been compared to putting your mouth up to a firehose and turning it on: the amount of available information can be overwhelming.

Figure 3

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Netscape - [Swine Research]
File  Edit  View  Go  Bookmarks  Options  Directory                    Help

Location: http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/project/www/ncsu/cals/an_sci/ann_rep94/swineres.h   N

What's New!  What's Cool!  Handbook   Net Search  Net Directory  Newsgroups
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Department of Animal Science

Swine Research

- Effect of Lowering Serum Somatotropin and Insulin-like Growth Factor-I on Puberty and Ovulation Rate in Gilts
  J.D. Armstrong, W.L. Flowers, J.H. Britt, R.M. Campbell and A. Felix

- Characterization of the Use of Artificial Insemination in the N.C. Swine Industry
  W.L. Flowers

- Enhancement of Fertility with A.I.: Effect of Oxytocin as a Pre-Breeding Stimuli