



# Second Annual Conference on World-Wide Web Applications

## Chairman's report

The 2nd Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications took place at the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) in Johannesburg, South Africa from 6-8 September 2000. Organized by Professor Pieter van Brakel of RAU's Department of Information Studies and sponsored by the Centre for Research in Web-based Applications at RAU, together with Commerce Quest, Excalibur, Dimension Data, Logical, Pic-a-Puter, and Metropolis, the conference was attended by some 290 delegates and speakers from all over South Africa and a few from abroad who came together to hear about the latest Internet developments and trends, discuss Internet applications in a variety of contexts, and meet friends and colleagues and learn how they are also working with the Web.

For a quick look at the more social side of the Conference, a number of pictures are published in the [Photo Gallery](#).

Highlights of the conference were the keynote speeches by distinguished overseas speakers including Martin White, Managing Director of Intranet Focus Ltd in England; Stephen Arnold, President of Arnold Information Technology, in the USA; Louis Fourie, Chairperson of Citadel, South Africa; and Jim Toner of the University of Maine, USA. Martin White addressed the issues, challenges and technologies of mobile access to the Web; while Steve Arnold gave an overview of the different ways of earning revenues on the Web by keeping surfers on a site for longer. In another extremely interesting paper, Louis Fourie discussed the new global economy, comparing the old scheme of doing things with the new. For his presentation on the distance learning programme at the University of Maine, Jim Toner arranged a live videoconference link with colleagues back in the USA to demonstrate not only the Web sessions for distance learning, but also the technologies involved. David Raitt from The Netherlands, who is the Conference Chairman, also provided his usual overview of some of the current Internet/WWW trends and applications including privacy on the Web, Web cams and virtual reality applications.

The 40 or so other papers offered a highly diverse and rich view of Internet/WWW use and applications, mainly in South Africa but also in Germany, Sweden, England and Italy. Papers covered aspects such as search engines; issues for Web masters; using the Web to fight crime; the Web's impact on society; conducting research via the Web; using the Web for course work; and personalized Web applications, among other topics. The full papers are contained in the Conference Proceedings which are being published in the South African Journal of Information Management (<http://general.rau.ac.za/journal/sajim>). The overall conference also included a number of seminars and workshops on topics as diverse as portal technologies; electronic journals; search engines; personalizing Web sites; and knowledge management. There was also a one-day symposium on South African visual art and the Web, which attracted much interest.

The conference provided a full two days of listening to papers, interacting with colleagues

and finding out what is going on with Web applications and developments – and that was the aim of the conference, of course. The papers each gave glimpses of how the Internet and World Wide Web will develop in future in terms of access and content. A key message to come out of the conference, I felt, was that of delivery. Delivering the right services (including information) to the right person (not people) at the right time – in other words, delivering what you want, when you want it and where you want it. This message could be gleaned from all three of the major keynote speeches. Steve Arnold talked about the revenue factor, particularly concepts such as stickiness and magnetism – but the key point was Web sites delivering value information in order to create revenue. Martin White, discussing WAP technologies, noted various areas to keep an eye on in the future and again the emphasis was on delivery of data on demand to an individual. And Louis Fourie said essentially that it wasn't what you actually knew which would be important in the future, it's what you could actually deliver, that is what you could do for others. Other presentations also gave out this message whether the speakers were conscious of it or not.

So, the Internet, which is very much a part of our lives and here to stay, is not so much an information acquisition, storage and retrieval device, but rather a personalized service delivery mechanism. As I noted last year, new applications will continually appear and more and more people will gain access as governments and telephone (and other) companies provide the necessary infrastructure to wire the world. Conferences such as this one play an important role in bringing people together to be made aware of the possibilities and to discuss them with experts and other users. This 2nd Conference was another undoubted success and plans are already underway for the 3rd Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications, which will take place at RAU from 5–7 September 2001. The Call for Papers has already being issued and you can find it on the Web at [www.rau.ac.za/conf/www2001](http://www.rau.ac.za/conf/www2001). See you there!

*David Raitt*

### **Disclaimer**

Articles published in SAJIM are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor, Board, Publisher, Webmaster or the Rand Afrikaans University. The user hereby waives any claim he/she/they may have or acquire against the publisher, its suppliers, licensees and sub licensees and indemnifies all said persons from any claims, lawsuits, proceedings, costs, special, incidental, consequential or indirect damages, including damages for loss of profits, loss of business or downtime arising out of or relating to the user's use of the Website.

ISSN 1560-683X

Published by [InterWord Communications](#) for the Centre for Research in Web-based Applications,  
Rand Afrikaans University

