

Webmasters Report - for presentation at AGM2010

The 2009-2010 year saw a major upgrade of the website, initially to build 2.0 and then almost immediately to build 3.0. This was necessitated by a number of bugs in the system that prevented the site running properly and by the outdated layout, the latter of which was difficult to navigate and to find information on. It is hope that the newer version is more comfortable and yet retains the speed that most of us expect.

A quick look at the site stats for the website would indicate that we get a significant number of visitors from overseas and it can only be hoped that this is helping to disseminate knowledge of microbiology in New Zealand to a world-wide audience; after all this objective is at the heart of our society's aims. Content, however, is a different matter. Unfortunately there has been only limited content provided for the website. This means that it can be difficult to keep the pages interesting and informative, as well as new.

There are some improvements planned over the next few months. For example, it is hope that in the near future there will be greater cooperation with the newsletter (NZ Bioscience) in terms of content so that at least some of the material can be included on the website. It would also be wonderful to see some highlights of the scientific endeavours of our many microbiologists included on the website as well, including wherever appropriate the awards they might receive for their activities. As a start to achieving this, it is planned to add profiles of microbiologists from all walks of life to the website, explaining what it is they do and its relevance. These profiles should cover individuals from both academia and industry. Moreover, it is also planned to target institutions giving them a brief introduction and links to their own site, so as to raise awareness of the different sites at which microbiology is carried out, again both in the academic and industrial settings. As always, achieving this will depend on the goodwill of the membership in providing the requisite information and in keeping the webmaster informed.

For the future it is worth noting that technology is rapidly advancing – faster in fact than the webmasters brain. The website has purposely been kept fairly simple up to now, in deference to those that must make do with a dial-up connection; certainly under those circumstances you don't want to be downloading flashy webpages that take thirty minutes per page to load! However, very soon most New Zealanders will have access to far more rapid data streaming. As a consequence, there will be a concomitant expectation that our website be significantly upgraded commensurate with available new technology. When that time arrives it will be necessary to (i) have a serious discussion and referendum on exactly what we want from our website, (ii) decide just what type of advanced technology we want to incorporate in it and (iii) employ someone trained in the field to create (and potentially also maintain) our website. In the meantime, any and all suggestions will be given the consideration that they deserve.

Ralph Jack, Webmaster
01. October, 2010