

## APS Gopher Server Marks Anniversary

In December 1992, APS brought its "Gopher" information server on-line, joining over 600 other institutions and organizations who offer information to the public on this network within the Internet. The APS information server is designed to provide the scientific community with rapid access to information about the Society, its meetings, and its publications. The APS information server is a pioneer in this field and is one of only 14 servers listed on the Library of Congress Gopher as a medical information resource.

Gopher is a computer program developed by the University of Minnesota that lets you search for information held on computers anywhere in the world that are part of the same system. The name is a play on words since the University of Minnesota is the home of the "Golden Gophers," and Gopher software fetches information the way a junior staffer designated as "go-fer" might do.

For the novice Internet user, Gopher offers the advantage of letting you browse through file holdings and do key word searches using menus and some relatively simple commands without having to know beforehand the Internet addresses where the materials are held. The Gopher software handles that part automatically for the user.

The easiest way to use Gopher is if your own Internet computer has Gopher "client" software installed on it. (You can find out whether it does by asking a knowledgeable colleague or contacting your campus computer network administrator.) If your Internet computer has a Gopher client, then you can start your explorations by typing "Gopher" at the Internet prompt. (If it doesn't have Gopher software, it probably give you a message that the command wasn't found.) If your machine has a Gopher client, by typing Gopher and pressing the return key, you will find yourself at a main Gopher menu, which will offer you various options, one of which should be to connect with other Gophers and information servers. (Most Gopher servers offer this option.) This permits you to gain access to servers around the world by positioning your indicator arrow beside its name and pressing the return key. You can find the APS information server by selecting the following menu options:

"Other Gophers" → "North America" → "USA" → "General" → "American Physiological Society"

You may also be able to go directly to the APS Gopher by typing "gopher oac.hsc.uth.tmc.edu 3300" at the Internet prompt. Once you arrive at the APS Information Server, a wealth of possibilities are available. Figure 1 shows a list of the menu choices on the first screen of the Server.

Since the APS Information Server was launched, it has been receiving increasing attention from the community of Gopher users on the Internet, as shown in Table 1. In

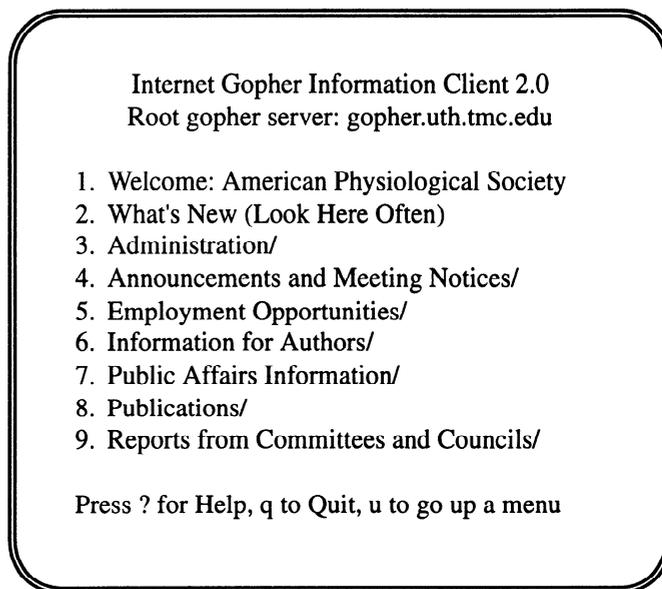


Figure 1. APS Gopher—Main Menu

December 1992, 340 host computers accessed the APS Server to request information objects. For the month of September this year, the number of host computers accessing the APS server had increased to 874. Each time a host computer recovers information, a "connection" is made. As Table 2 shows, connections have increased from 2,227 in December of last year to 5,297 in September of this year. Examples of information that might be retrieved through a connection include

- the main APS menu
- the list of items within the "Publications" section
- the "Awards Programs" text file
- a search of the "Tables of Contents of APS Journals"

### Some Gopher Hints

When you see a Gopher menu,

- / at the end of the line means a directory, that is, another menu.
- . at the end of the line means a text item.
- ? at the end of the line means an indexed directory where you can search on key words.

Select an item by pressing the return key.

Table 1. APS Gopher Information Server: Access and Utilization

	Hosts	Connections
December 1992	340	2,227
January 1993	432	2,540
February 1993	452	3,259
March 1993	541	4,008
April 1993	614	3,995
May 1993	732	4,656
June 1993	707	4,243
July 1993	691	4,733
August 1993	722	4,589
September 1993	874	5,297

Table 2. APS Gopher Information Server: Main Menu Utilization

	Dec. '92	March '93	June '93	Sept. '93
/ (main menu)	618	963	1,089	1,250
Administration	111	49	36	65
Announcements	101	82	70	78
Author	25	61	59	60
Committee Reports	20	48	60	89
Employment		186	244	284
Introduction	223	205	188	222
Public Affairs		76	66	76
Publications	211	353	345	429
What's New!		207	250	274

Table 2 also provides information on how often host computers made connections with the Main Menu and with items deeper in APS's "gopherspace." Access to the main menu has risen from 618 in December 1992 to 1,250 in September 1993. In September, there were 1,577 connections made beyond the first menu. As indicated, the four most popular connections beyond the main menu were "Publications" (429 or 27.2%), "Employment" (284 or 18.0%), "What's New!" (274 or 17.4%), and "Introduction" (222 or 14.1%).

The "Publications" selection provides the user with access to the Table of Contents of all the APS journals from January 1993 to the present. The Tables of Contents of APS journals are usually posted on Gopher up to three weeks in advance of publication. You can scan the Tables of Contents by viewing each month individually, or you can search it using WAIS (Wide Area Information Search), which finds each occurrence of key word(s) and provides a list of titles containing the requested word(s). The "Publications" section also provides a listing of the editors and associate editors of the journals and subscription information. APS's future plans

include posting the abstracts of accepted manuscripts on the Gopher server up to four months in advance of print publication, and you will be able to do key word searches of them using WAIS.

The "Employment" section provides a listing of all jobs published in *The Physiologist*. For a fee of \$50, employers are able to post job vacancies on Gopher for a three-month period and have the announcement published in *The Physiologist*. This service will hopefully be expanded next year with more position vacancies and a listing of individuals seeking employment.

"What's New!" provides information on new items added to the APS Gopher. It includes notifications of updates in the Public Affairs and Publications area. "Introduction" provides access to a menu of approximately 12 items that detail various aspects of Society function. Individuals interested in learning about the APS are encouraged to browse through the listings under "Introduction."

It is worth noting that although you can move hierarchically through a menu structure, it is also possible to take shortcuts. If you plan to check a particular screen frequently for new information, you may be able to set up a "bookmark" that will take you directly to that screen. For example, if a cell physiologist wishes to keep tabs on what is posted on the "AJP: Cell Physiology" screen, he/she can place a "bookmark" there. (See accompanying box.)

The APS Gopher is the first step in APS's effort to publish and communicate electronically with the physiological community. The quality of that effort will depend on the membership's assessment of the utility of the Server and an indication of what additional items should be included. To that end, the Society encourages you to visit the APS Gopher and send your comments to APS at the following e-mail address: [marty@aps.mhs.compuserve.com](mailto:marty@aps.mhs.compuserve.com).

### Marking Your Place in Gopherspace

Many Gopher clients permit you to set up "bookmarks," which are a very convenient way to revisit resources you find useful. You can create a bookmark by holding down the shift key and typing the letter A at the screen you wish to mark. The gopher client will ask you for a name, but you can accept the default it offers by pressing the return key.

You can call up your bookmarks anywhere by typing "v," or you can enter Gopher at your bookmarks by starting your session with the command "Gopher-b."