

Chemical Education Today

Report

Science and Engineering Information at the NSF Web Site

by Donald J. Wink

It is easy to think of the National Science Foundation (NSF) as an organization dedicated to just the support of science research and education, and indeed, that is how most of us interact with the Foundation. However, the NSF's mission includes activities to "promote the progress of science", so it is not surprising that it also has been authorized to "provide a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on scientific and technical resources". In this effort, the NSF Web site provides a wealth of timely information on science and engineering, including educational issues. The NSF Web site is also an excellent place to start looking for information available through other Federal agencies. Careful inspection of this information can do a lot to help researchers and educators get a wide view of the place of their efforts in the nation's science efforts.

The information dissemination effort at NSF begins with publicizing important results of NSF-supported research. The major entry into this is through the page at <http://www.nsf.gov/home/scineews/start.htm>, where you will also find links to the NSF

Frontiers magazine, a biweekly newspaper, and a special feature for school children. All of these and others are excellent places to look for information, often written at a level accessible to students and on the "cutting edge" of science and engineering. More advanced information on research can often be found linked to particular program areas as well.

NSF's Web page, as I suggested, is also a rich source for raw data on education in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. A lot of it is available from the Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication on their publication page (<http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pub.htm>). This includes items such as the "Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education", a rich set of data, with interpretations, showing trends in education over the last three decades. REC is also the site for information on evaluation of programs, which draws on many years of NSF's efforts at internal and external evaluation of program progress. Several of these items require installing the free Adobe Acrobat Reader program to open the pdf-format files.

NSF's research directorates include social, behavioral, and economic sciences. This is the place to turn to for connections to research in fundamental learning and cognition issues. The "SBE Science Nuggets" page at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/nuggets/start.htm> is very well done, and it allows an organized look at social and behavioral research related to teaching and student development. SBE also directs programs in resource studies, resulting in data sets and related information at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/pubdata.htm>.

Finally, NSF provides links to other Web sites that are important places for basic information on science and mathematics education. Statistical information is organized on the "FedStats" page at <http://www.fedstats.gov/>. NSF also works in parallel to the National Center for Education Statistics at the Department of Education; they have lots of data available at their page, <http://nces.ed.gov/>.

Donald J. Wink is in the Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL 60607; dwink@uic.edu.

NSF Information

National Science Foundation—Science News:
<http://www.nsf.gov/home/scineews/start.htm>

REC—Publications:
<http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pub.htm>

SBE Science Nuggets:
<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/nuggets/start.htm>

Publications and Data:
<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/pubdata.htm>

Fedstats: <http://www.fedstats.gov/>

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES):
<http://nces.ed.gov/>

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