The growth of the Web has enabled us to locate and download CRM legislation; search the National Register and HABS/HAER databases; find employment, internship, and grant opportunities; review program information; conduct library catalog searches; and, communicate with distant colleagues. As with traditional library resources, careful users must evaluate the reliability of Web-based information. The most effective and useful Web sites have the following characteristics in common:

- They provide a site index and are easily navigable; they are not graphics intensive.
- They are continually updated and improved.
- They provide pertinent contact information.
- They focus on a wide and diverse audience, not just CRM professionals.
- They make preservation relevant for the average person.
- They make connections and integrate issues such as conservation, transportation, fundraising, etc.

While the majority of cultural resource sites use the Web mainly for publication of program information, some organizations are beginning to utilize the more dynamic character of the Web. In the near future, cultural resource sites will offer distance learning opportunities, facilitated discussion groups on local issues, promotion of action items and daily updates such as the ISTEA Reauthorization site, and teleconferencing. Although some of the most technologically sophisticated sites were expensive to develop, it is fairly easy to learn the programming language (HTML) used to create Web pages. In short, by introducing new audiences to cultural resource issues, facilitating remote communication between peers, reducing the cost of information distribution, and significantly expanding the range of easily accessible information, the World Wide Web is an increasingly powerful educational and promotional tool.

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The author's list of relevant WWW resources is presented on the back cover of this issue.

Edie Ramey and Jannette Wesley

Amoeba—NPS Technical Information on the Web

The Technical Information Center (TIC), Denver Service Center (DSC) is the oldest and largest information system in the National Park Service (NPS). TIC contains materials from all over the NPS including drawings and documents on the infrastructure of the NPS dating back to the 1800s. Parks and regions routinely send copies of materials to TIC for microfilming and inclusion in the TIC database; the collection exceeds 800,000 drawn images and a larger number of document images.

TIC is the only service wide collection in the NPS that houses technical information images in an organized, easily retrievable manner. The collection contains such important documents as the original drawings for Ellis Island, a 1930s vegetation map of the Great Smoky Mountains, and images of Alcatraz and ships in San Francisco Harbor (these drawings were borrowed from the museum there, filmed and returned). Just as we have ensured during the past 28 years that an institutional technical memory of our park infrastructures has been preserved, we need to ensure that the new electronic files/memory are preserved; by preserving these, a new age of self-delivery of information will result.

The Amoeba Project is a document and imaging project being conducted by TIC. The vision for Amoeba is that it will be the central repository/single point-of-access for NPS-wide data stored in Denver. Increasingly, there has been a demand by the public and the NPS to make these documents readily available. In order to move toward an integration of electronic files and images (i.e., CAD files linked with drawing image, GIS files linked with map images, word-processed files linked with document images), the TIC system was converted to Lotus Notes® in December 1997. An Intranet (local area network) server has been set-up. This allows TIC to publish data to the Internet while linking scanned images and electronic documents to database entries. Denver-based NPS employees, parks, and members of the general public will soon be able to view these documents with Web browser software, print copies of drawings, and conduct research. TIC is used by park personnel, central office personnel, and the public to accomplish the following:

- Identify NPS plans for use as models or standards for new projects and resource management.
- Develop descriptions of the cultural and natural context of a site.
- Obtain information to assist in disaster recovery
- Preserve legal documents.
- Increase public understanding of NPS resources.
- Provide research materials for scholars and writers.
- Furnish historical information to readers of history.

Our scanning and database conversion is a major undertaking in making TIC's wealth of information available to greater audiences across the nation.

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