



NMFRC News

<http://cai.eclipse.net/home2.htm>

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Resource Center User Statistics

The National Metal Finishing Resource Center (NMFRC) is a one-stop electronically linked source for all the information metal finishers need on an occasional or regular basis. It is accessed through the World Wide Web on the Internet at the address:

<http://cai.eclipse.net>

The new NMFRC is a major hit with the metal finishing industry. Recently attained user statistics indicate that the NMFRC, which began operations in April, had nearly 270 members as of July 10th. This month's column focuses on user statistics and highlights several new elements of the NMFRC Website.

Resource Center Use

Key statistics are presented in the accompanying table showing the

Resource Center User Statistics

Web Page	Hits* 5/11 to 6/10	Hits* 6/11 to 7/10
Homepage	322	1,194
Technical Information	406	1,377
Regulatory Information	97	704
On-line Conferences	410	1,294
Weather Page	0	1,016
Metals, Stocks & Economy	200	904

**The term "hits" is the number of times a particular page was viewed by Resource Center users.*

dramatic increase in Resource Center use over the two-month period May 11 to July 11, 1996. The number of times that the Resource Center was accessed increased by a factor of

nearly four. The number of "hits" on the Technical Information page increased at about the same rate. This area of the NMFRC contains various resources, including a searchable database with more than 4,100 entries that pertain to a wide-range of metal finishing topics. After conducting searches, users can view abstracts of the documents. Also, full text is available for many articles and reports. During the period of June 11–July 10, 699 database searches were conducted and 8,143 abstracts were viewed by NMFRC users.

Use of the Resource Center's regulatory information increased by a factor of seven during the surveyed time period. The cause of this growth may be the additions and improvements made to this area of the Website. Recent changes include a reorganization of regulatory information and the addition of numerous regulatory determinations. The determinations are interpretations of specific regulations that are found in letters written by personnel from regulatory agencies like EPA. These determinations can often be used as a starting point in discussions between

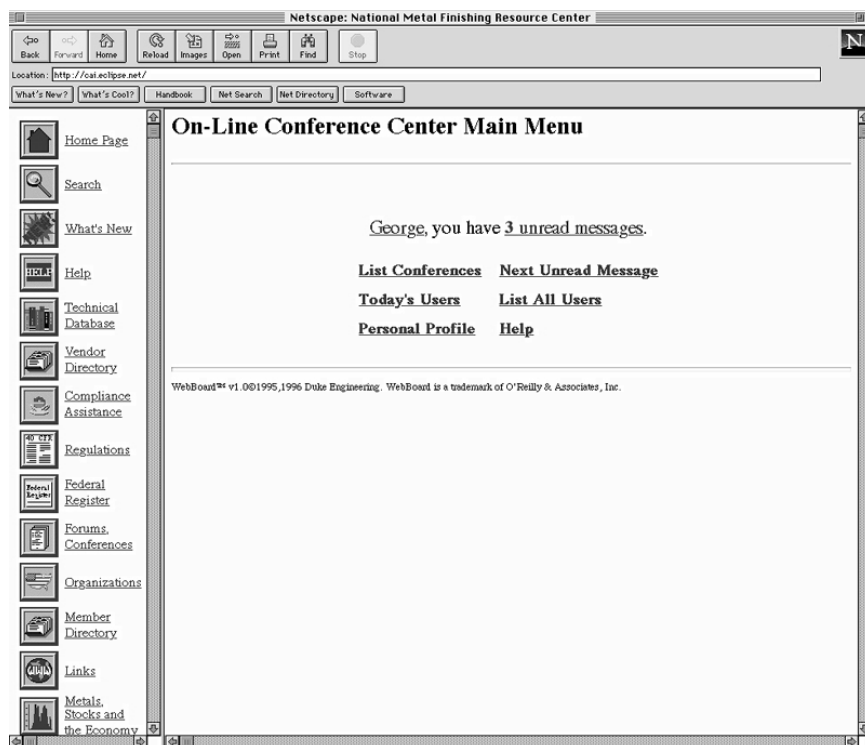


Fig. 1—On-line conferences main menu.

metal finishing shops and local regulatory agencies.

The Resource Center's on-line conferences continue to be one of the most popular areas of the Website. There are more than 20 on-line conferences being conducted, with plans to dramatically increase that number later this year. The on-line conferences allow users to interface with hundreds of knowledgeable industry and government people. You can browse through strings of organized questions, responses and comments and post your own information at any time. The Website software remembers which on-line conference messages that each user has read and, when prompted, delivers only unread messages during subsequent visits to the Resource Center. As of July 11, there were 256 questions, responses and comments posted in the conferences, which were read an average of 26 times each. Directions for using the on-line conferences are presented here in "Instructions for Using the NMFRC On-Line Conferences."

Other popular areas of the Website include the Weather page and the Metal, Stocks and Economy pages. The Weather page was especially active during the a recent hurricane watch (Bertha) on the East Coast. During that time, a radar picture was posted and updated hourly that showed the location of the hurricane and the likelihood of coming ashore at various points along the East Coast. The Metal, Stocks and Economy pages provide various resources to track individual stocks, daily metal prices and general economic trends and news.

What's New?

During the past month, there have been several important additions to the Resource Center Website. The most popular of these is the Rinse Calculator, an on-line tool for calculating the rinse water requirements for various conditions and rinsing configurations. To work the calculator, users enter data, such as the bath concentration and temperature, and submit the data. The calculator then displays a range of rinsing configurations with different numbers of rinse tanks and plumbing arrangements (e.g., drag-out rinses and counterflow rinses) along with the water use rates. If a particular rinse

Instructions for Using the NMFRC On-Line Conferences

Here are some basic instructions for using the on-line conferences. Please note that the exact arrangement of the conference pages may change over time as improvements and additions are made to the Website.

1. Go to the National Metal Finishing Resource Center homepage using the address: <http://cai.eclipse.net>.
2. Using the menu on the left frame, click on "Conferences." The system software will ask you for your user name and password.* After entering these, you will see an initial page with a list of choices. If this is your first visit to the On-Line Conferences, click on the help page for detailed information. Otherwise, from the initial conference page go to the On-Line Conference Main Menu (Fig. 1).
3. At the On-Line Conference Main Menu you have several choices. At the top of the page, you will see an indication of the number of messages that you have not yet read. From this menu, you can view the list of conferences, go directly to any unread messages, view lists of all users or a list of "today's users," or fill out your personal profile (an optional on-line form that informs other users about your interests).
4. Once you enter a particular conference, you view a display of message topics. Click on a topic to view the entire message. If you want to respond to the message, click on "post follow-up." Your response can be a sentence or two or as much as you choose to type. Also, you can add hypertext links to other Websites, graphics or other advanced elements. There are detailed instructions under "on-line conference help" that describe how to prepare creative conference messages.
5. At any time you can click on "post a new topic" to start a new discussion thread in any of the on-going conferences. Also, you can request that a new conference be initiated for subject areas not yet covered.

**To receive a user name and password, click on "New Users Start Here" on the NMFRC homepage.*



Fig. 2—Examples of rinse systems calculator output.

configuration can operate as a zero-discharge rinse, the user is notified by a blinking message. An example display for chromium plating/rinsing is shown in Fig. 2.

Other new aspects of the Website include conversion factors for

common engineering calculations, a periodic table with links to information about the elements, a database of technical assistance providers (e.g., local and state agencies that provide on-site compliance assistance to platers) and a calendar of events. **P&SF**