

New home page offers easier access to information

Eight main topics, quicker graphics, 'a public service'

The next time you want up-to-date information on benefits or available research grants, let your mouse do the browsing on the University's newly designed Web page.

The new page, which went on-line Monday, was revised to help users find information about the University, its programs and services, said Judy Hallman, campus webmaster.

"We tried to address the problems users reported with the old home page, which has been in place since December 1994," she said.

Those problems included slow-loading graphics and hard-to-access information, she said.

University information now is organized under eight main topics: campus sites and services; admissions; research and academics; office of the chancellor; libraries; information for students; news of the day; and alumni and friends.

Clicking on "News of the Day," for instance, brings up 10 choices—from campus calendars, to University publications such as the *Gazette* and the *Daily Tar Heel*, to regional and global news.

Users quickly can find out in the *Gazette* how the Employee Forum or Faculty Council voted at its last meeting, then switch to an up-to-the-minute area weather forecast or national CNN report.

The bottom of the page features a button bar with four functions for speedier information retrieval: directories, search, comments and help. The previous Web page had no button bar.

The "Directories" button brings up the on-line campus directory, directory of classes, access to academic and administrative units, and the

The ultimate goal in redesigning the University's home page was to make information about the University easily accessible to the public as well as those within the

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

- [Campus Sites and Services](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Research and Academics](#)
- [Office of the Chancellor](#)
- [Libraries](#)
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- [News of the Day](#)
- [Alumni and Friends](#)



- [Directories](#)
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www.unc.edu>, as the entry point, Hallman said.

"It was painful," Howard M. Fried (biochemistry) said in his message to the Web-Walkers," Hallman said. The Web-Walkers is a group of campus volunteers that meets regularly to build and coordinate the campuswide Web service.

Essentially, she said, this succinct message from one faculty member echoed the complaints others were voicing. Hallman, who responds to more than 200 messages a month directed to <info@unc.edu>, said the feedback coming in was that the graphics were very slow to come up on the screen and the information was focused internally and very difficult to use.

"People who would like to attend Carolina, for example, could not find the admissions information," she said. "Undergraduate Admissions, the Graduate School, Continuing Education, the Registrar's Office and the various schools all had home pages, but they were mixed in with other information in the 'Departments and Organizations' section."

The new home page, however, has an "Admissions" category with direct access to these individual pages.

Input from many groups led to changes

Two projects provided the impetus for

way information was organized.

Hallman said the group also wanted to respond to increased use of the Web information. Many things people now look for weren't on-line when the last home page was designed nearly two years ago, she said, and the number of departmental and organiza-

We always welcome input from our users. That input is valuable in assessing how we can make changes for the better.

Judy Hallman

tion home pages alone has grown from a handful to some 200 today.

Web service a necessity

Anne Parker, ITS interim executive director of policy and planning, said the Web service had changed from a "nice-to-have" service to a major source of information about the University.

"The University's Web pages are an entry point

through which people around the world learn about the campus, interact with our people and tap into our resources, which