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## Using the Web—Using the Web to Write or Modify a Biosafety Manual (BSM)

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This is a new column for *Applied Biosafety: Journal of the American Biological Safety Association*. In it, I will try to highlight web sites of interest to biosafety professionals as well as how to search the Web to answer questions that come floating over the e-mail list, Biosafety. This first column relates to e-mail questions.

One of the frequent requests on the e-mail list Biosafety is how to either write a biosafety manual or write a particular section within the manual. The WWW is a great place to start on that quest. Using the search terms (biosafety OR [biological safety]) NEAR manual, on Northern Light (northernlight.com) yielded 18,997 hits. What follows is not a detailed description of each and every site but a synopsis of what can be found.

The first 17 hits are from various universities in the United States, Canada, and Australia. By adding additional terms in your search, you can narrow the search down to a particular country or biosafety level. For example, changing the above search to read (biosafety OR [biological safety]) NEAR (manual and [BL3 OR BSL3 OR "BL 3" OR "BSL 3"]), one gets only 88 hits. Thus, by carefully selecting your search parameters, you can narrow your search to a manageable size.

Another way is to go to the web site of a university that is similar to yours to see if they have their manual on-line. A great web site is [www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ.html](http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ.html), which is a site of links to college and university web sites around the world. Most biotechnology industries do not post their manuals on their public site, but a university's BSM could easily be adapted for industrial use, especially one written with large-scale procedures in place.

**Note:** Web search services are not equal. An article in *Nature* about a year ago gave Northern Light a slight edge over Alta Vista in the number of web pages indexed. Both of these search services far exceed in sites indexed the other popular search services available. An interesting search service is Ask Jeeves ([www.askjeeves.com/](http://www.askjeeves.com/)) which allows one to ask a question, such as "What is the biosafety level of a transgenic mouse?" This question returned 50 hits, all involved with biotechnology, and mainly transgene (both animal and crop). The most interesting site found was "Transgenic Mouse Core Facility Purdue University Transgenic Mouse Core Facility Instruction Manual for Users." This didn't cover biosafety, but was interesting nevertheless.