November 2013

Innovations Affecting Us/ Gophers

Judy Luther
The Faxon Company

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Recommended Citation
Luther, Judy (1993) "Innovations Affecting Us/ Gophers," Against the Grain: Vol. 5: Iss. 1, Article 10.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1311

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
Unlike the furry critters that burrow in the ground, Gophers are gateways to the Internet and they can open a huge variety of remote files for our use and for our patrons. As a gopher client we can access directories, full text files (including books), phone books, search engines, library databases, weather, newspapers, recipes — any database maintained on a gopher server. Navigating the Internet becomes easy in a gopher mode as there are menus listing database options and it is not necessary to know the address of other institutions to search their databases.

Gophers represent a type of client/server technology which has been around for a few years. Basically it uses computer power at both ends, the “client” ideally uses a workstation to search a remote database on a “server”. Although you can use a terminal if your network machine runs the gopher client interface, PC’s have a better response time, an easier user interface and allow you to manipulate downloaded data. Gopher software is available for many client (Macintosh, PC, NeXT, Sun, etc.) and most server platforms.

It is so easy to mount files to share, publishers and vendors could list available materials for selection and ordering. Any remote database mounted on a gopher server can be easily accessible on the Internet via menus listing options from which to choose.

Once you enter the world of “gopherspace”, you will find other terms being used such as “gopherize your data” which means making it available via a gopher server. “Archie” provides keyword access to FTP (file transfer protocol) archives in gopherspace. “Veronica” (my favorite, stands for “very easy rodent-oriented net-wide index to computerized archives”) provides keyword access to the growing number of gopher server menus that we can browse.

Gophers are both a solution and a problem. They enable anyone with a PC to mount data which can be searched internationally. As a result, we will be faced with a multitude of files which will make finding the information we need both easy and challenging. A variety of services will develop in the future to facilitate this process. If you’d like to discuss these issues, you might be interested in attending either Nationalnet in Washington, D.C. in April or Educom in Cincinnati this October.

You can obtain Gopher software via anonymous FTP from “boombox.micro.umn.edu” in the directory “/pub/gopher”. If you just want to look at gopher from a public service terminal, telnet to “consultant.micro.umn.edu” and log in as “gopher”. This will give you a feel for the variety of files available and how they work.

The people who developed the gopher software can be reached via email “gopher@boombox.micro.umn.edu” or write to them at Internet Gopher Developers, 100 Union St. S.E. #190, Minneapolis MN 55455, FAX 612-625-6817. You can subscribe to the gopher-news mailing list by sending a request to “gopher-news request@boombox.micro.umn.edu”.

---

**“WE’LL CUSTOM TAILOR OUR SERVICES TO FIT YOUR PARTICULAR NEEDS”**

- **Standing Orders**
- **Custom Invoicing**
- **Firm Orders**
- **On-Line Inquiry & Order**
- **Rush Service**

131 Middle Street  
voice: 1-800-937-0331
P.O. Box 4540  
bbs: 1-800-456-5201
Portland, Maine 04112  
Fax: 1-207-774-4678

---

February 1993 / Against the Grain 25