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## Information, Information Everywhere

“Knowing a great deal is not the same as being smart; intelligence is not information alone but also judgment, the manner in which information is collected and used,” said astronomer, astro-chemist and author Carl Sagan.

We are living in a continually changing time, as evidenced by how quickly the world economy has shifted in the last year alone. Chemical engineering grew up in the Industrial Age, focusing on the production of physical goods. But with the evolution of the computer, the last two decades have brought us into the present era — the Information Age, a time where the pace of change is so rapid that even by the time you receive your new issue of *CEP* in the mail, some of the news may already be “old” news. With email, video, blogs and news websites, the Internet has brought a surplus of information. You can search for anything you want, anytime you want, and find the information you need.

In addition, a whole new world has opened up even within the Internet world — Web 2.0 — which not only keeps you up-to-date with news, but also with your social life. With the emergence of social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, you can keep in touch with friends and colleagues, as well as create new relationships and networks to support your professional growth.

AIChE and *CEP* are “keeping up with the times” to continue evolving and supporting chemical engineers in this new Information Age. This month, we are introducing a new online forum that we hope will create a more interactive and information-relevant magazine.

Three different topics are launching the new discussion forum. The first two — already being utilized by readers — are Letters to the Editor and Reader Commentary. Here, we welcome follow-up comments, questions, and discussion on articles, the magazine, or other readers’ postings.

The third topic, “Real-World Interactions,” is designed for the inexperienced engineer and will cover some of the real-world situations that are not taught in school. This includes issues such as email etiquette, travel and cultural knowledge, who should pay for a business luncheon, etc. — the things engineers need to know to be successful, but weren’t taught and may be afraid to ask. In the real world, the most successful engineers are not necessarily the ones who have the most technical knowledge, but those who also know how to manage real-world situations.

Since the best advice often comes from experience, instead of asking one expert to write about a topic, we are turning to you — our readers. If you experienced or witnessed a situation that you think less-experienced engineers should know how to handle, please share it on the forum, comment on other readers’ experiences, or start a new topic.

Last month’s article “Designing the New Global Chemical Engineer” (pp. 6–9) described some schools’ efforts to help students develop such real-world savvy. If you have additional thoughts, ideas and/or solutions, here is your opportunity to teach them. Or, if you have a situation you don’t know how to handle and are too shy to ask at work, ask our forum and receive relevant and professional advice from other members.

The new *CEP* forum can be found under the Chemical Engineering Progress section at <http://www.aiche.org/teamspace/forums.aspx>. Login, submit a comment, start a new topic, or answer a question. Help yourself and others to become “intelligent” engineers.

Joanna Ziemlewska  
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