

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
"RUĐER BOŠKOVIĆ" ON INTERNET

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1. INTRODUCTION

An extremely rapid development of Internet has influenced astronomy in every detail. Back in 1992 Larry Smarr from the University of Illinois established a fact that "it is the destiny of astronomy to become the first all-digital science" (Murtagh, 1992). We present in this paper the effort of the Astronomical Society "Ruđer Bošković" to describe its activities on Internet, i.e., on the World Wide Web (WWW).

2. WWW PRESENTATIONS

Since the need for an appropriate home page has become a necessity, the Astronomical Society "Ruđer Bošković" has decided to present numerous activities that are currently carried out, as well as some historical facts from the Society's past. The emphasis was given on the Belgrade Astronomical Weekend (BAW '96) that has become a traditional manifestation – it was organized fourteen times so far.

WWW presentation of the BAW '96, written in English, was conceived in such a manner as to enable a user to obtain the basic information concerning the BAW and the main astronomical events in Belgrade. The program of the BAW was presented together with the facts about its organizer. The central document is BAW '96 Home Page put into `index.html` file. If one starts from it, the basic information concerning the Astronomical Society, program of the BAW and some links to the facts about the astronomy in Belgrade and astronomy in general can be obtained.

The facts about the Astronomical Society "Ruđer Bošković" are put in a separate HTML (HyperText Mark-up Language) document which represents the home page of the Society. This document is named `Astronomical Society "Ruđer Bošković"` and a brief history of its activities from the very beginning is described. A small review of the present situation is also given. Interesting links include one towards the document about the magazine of the Society – *Vasiona*. The links towards the personal home pages of the members of the Society that were in the position to create them are also offered.

The program of the BAW '96 itself was also conceived as a separate HTML document: `Belgrade Astronomical Weekend '96 - Schedule` in which the sequence of

events was presented using the table representation. Within the document the links towards the personal home pages of some lecturers were created.

The links with the facts about astronomy in Belgrade and astronomy in general are represented with the separate HTML document *About Astronomy in Belgrade*. From this document the links to the documents about the Society are possible: to the above mentioned home page of the Society, members and their work in the Society and to some papers that were prepared in the Society. Some astronomical news in PDF (Portable Document Format)¹ were also included.

The document about *Vasiona (Magazine Vasiona)* describes the topics of this magazine and has links towards some latest news.

The papers of the people who work in the Society and the members are presented also in PDF using the link to the separate document named *Papers*. This document can be reached via the documents *Magazine Vasiona*, *About Astronomy in Belgrade* and the links from the personal home pages.

The whole presentation was written using the HTML 3.0 version. It was installed on the UNIX computer in the directory `/bav/public_html` on the temporary WWW address, at the following URL: <http://fon.fon.bg.ac.yu/bav/index.html>. This presentation could be seen using both graphical WWW browsers (for example, Netscape) and non- graphical WWW browsers (for example, Lynx). This presentation was announced on the Belgrade Usenet conference `yu.sci.astronomy` and the information concerning this presentation was forwarded to the mailing list of the IAYC (International Astronomical Youth Camp), the institution which collaborates with some members of the Astronomical Society.

It is worth noting that this presentation, made completely by the members of the Society, is not the only trace of the existence of the Astronomical Society "Ruder Bošković" on Internet. Namely, following the options on the home page of the world's leading magazine for amateur astronomy *Sky & Telescope* (URL: <http://www.skypub.com>) one can reach the presentation of the Society and its Planetarium and thus obtain the basic data concerning one of the biggest astronomical societies on the Balkan peninsula.

3. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The intention of the Astronomical Society "Ruder Bošković" is to provide a fast server (a computer that allows other computers to use it by means of appropriate software) in order to present its activities regularly. The emphasis will be given on the observational jobs, astronomical news and the presentation of the magazine *Vasiona*, which editorial staff plans to launch new, regular column dedicated to the presentation of the usage of computers in astronomy (software, hardware, communications etc.). Connections to other interesting astronomical sites within its future home page will also be of importance. This home page should then be announced to the world's leading

¹ For the information concerning PDF the following URL (Uniform Resource Locator – an attempt to standardize the location of addresses on Internet; the most common usage is in connection with WWW) can be useful: <http://www.adobe.com>.

WWW search engines such as Alta Vista (<http://www.altavista.digital.com>), Lycos (<http://www.lycos.com>), Yahoo (searchable subject-based catalogue of Internet which has a link for astronomical activities – <http://www.yahoo.com>).

References

Murtagh, F.: 1992, *The Messenger*, **70**, 71. The Smarr's quotation was originally published in *The Economist*, October 17, 1992.