

www.fdiworldental.org

An increasing number of national dental associations (NDAs) have discovered that a website on the Internet offers a fast and convenient way of distributing information for its members. Fifty-four NDA websites have been identified per July 2002, and the FDI website have links to all of these from the members part of the website. Various software programs in the Internet can be applied to estimate how popular these websites are, based on number of visitors, how many links that point to the website, how many search engines that have indexed the website, etc. Alexa.com operates one such program and rank all websites on the Internet from number one up to number four million. The ranking of the top fifteen NDA websites is shown in the table. The ranking correlates fairly with the number of member dentists. Some national dental associations have chosen to also include information targeted for the public (e.g. ADA and BDA), which of course inflate the number of visitors. However, the rankings give some suggestions as to the popularity of the websites amongst their dentist members. One website that stands out in this respect is the website of the Korean Dental Association.

The first website of FDI was developed in 1998, but major improvements and input commenced first in the beginning of 2001. At this time we began monitoring the website using Alexa, which showed that the site was ranked as #991638. Since then it has attracted many new users, and it ranks today as #111992 (Figure). Amongst international dental associations, the FDI website is now the most visited site on the Internet targeted solely for dental professionals. As comparison, the rankings of some other international dental organizations such as American Dental Educators Association (ADEA) is #254881, IADR, #410431 and the many American academies (endodontics, prosthodontics, periodontics, restorative dentistry, etc.) ranks between #130000 and #300000.

The main attribute of the website is that it appears rather dull, with no jazzy colours and moving figures, and without so-called cookies or javascript. This is deliberate for two reasons; one is that many of our members have slow telecommunication and not the state-of-the-art computers. The second reason is that just by being a world organisation, the FDI website is at risk for the committed internet-hacker, anticipating that a dull-looking website may not seem to be of a real challenge.

When entering the FDI website, the top table displays eight main topics, a central page that is modified occasionally and a column on the left side with text that continuously is changed. The main topics are titled the FDI organisation, FDI World Dental Press, FDI Congresses, FDI members, Global dental aid and aid organisations, Global dental information, The dental industry and Professional resources. However, wherever one is on the FDI website there is a site search facility found in the left column. This seemingly insignificant box is actually one of the most notable details of the FDI website, because any word, which can be a term, a name, a location, number, etc entered in this box will immediately generate a list of links to the relevant locations on the FDI website where the word appears. As 90% percent of all the contents on the website is in English, words in other languages will not result in many links, except if it appears in a FDI statement, which are also presented in German, French and Spanish.

The dental resources part includes information of relevance and hopefully of interest for dental professionals. Currently, it contains the database of guidelines in dentistry, now containing about 750 entries. Moreover, there are links to 74 dental journals that are electronically available and links to about 60 web-based continuous dental education providers. Moreover, two databases show "Emerging Health Care Technologies in Dentistry" and "Inquiries - Dental Science". These two last resources site are being developed part on basis of inquiries from you, the national dental associations, and individual members of your associations.

Specifically, these particular resources will reflect accumulated inquiries on scientific matters in dentistry. Undersigned will as best as possible try to provide guidance or advice by pointing out available information on the Internet, symposium proceedings or clinical guidelines, or the best science that is available to answer a specific question. By best science is meant the hierarchy described on the web site of the Centre for evidence-based medicine in Oxford, UK. The references are linked to Medline abstracts, and some resources are also freely available on the web. The actual paper is also in most cases linked to an electronic version, but users will in most cases need to pay to access the paper.

This service is primarily meant for NDAs who do not have the resources required to offer such service for its members, but queries from all member NDAs are of course welcomed. Use your own judgement how you will promote this FDI service to your members, but please advise that individual dentists must provide some proof of NDA membership, e.g. member number, before any questions are answered. Inquiries from NDAs will be prioritised and we reserve also the right to prioritise individual dentists' inquiries from countries with a small NDA. All inquiries should be sent to science@fdiworldental.org.

The aim of the FDI website is to become the most valuable, complete and reliable Internet source available for dental professionals. This entails a continuous active input of suggestions and requirements from national dental associations and individual dentists. We would be delighted to receive any feedback from you and will attempt to address all kind of requests.

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Table. National Dental Association Websites top 15 ranking, pr. 18 July 2002

| Name | Website | members | Alexa ranking |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------|---------------|
| American Dental Association | http://www.ada.org | 136417 | 26060 |
| Korean Dental Association | http://www.kda.or.kr | 13061 | 47317 |
| South African Dental Association | http://www.sadanet.co.za | 3060 | 109646 |
| Danish Dental Association | http://www.dtfnet.dk | 6114 | 177489 |
| Canadian Dental Association | http://www.cda-adc.ca | 10320 | 198222 |
| Australian Dental Association | http://www.ada.org.au | 7878 | 317955 |
| British Dental Association | http://www.bda-dentistry.org.uk | 16417 | 322296 |
| Norwegian Dental Association | http://www.tannlegeforeningen.no | 4777 | 349095 |
| Japanese Dental Association | http://www.jda.or.jp | 63236 | 438101 |
| Dutch Dental Association | http://www.nmt.nl | 7535 | 441855 |
| Hong Kong Dental Association | http://www.hkda.org/hkda/html | 1200 | 481489 |
| Turkish Dental Association | http://www.tdb.org.tr | 9680 | 557186 |
| Flemish Dental Association (Belgium) | http://www.vvt.be | 3400 | 660975 |
| Finnish Dental Association | http://www.hammasll.fi | 4863 | 687928 |
| Brazilian Dental Association | http://www.abonac.org.br | 16000 | 791712 |

Figure. Ranking of the FDI website since April 2001. Blue line shows the ranking of the former website address (www.fdi.org.uk) while the red line is the ranking of the present new address (www.fdiworldental.org) which began on the 1st of April 2002. The reason there are still so many visitors to the old website – in spite of containing no information – is that many users are slow to update their bookmarks.

