

MathSciNet Matters

This is the first MathSciNet Matters column. It is expected to appear in the *Notices* several times a year. It will include information on new features of MathSciNet and on the underlying Mathematical Reviews Database, together with tips on how to use MathSciNet to make the most of its richness of structure and content.

The MR Author Database. Every author of an item in MathSciNet is associated with a real person in the MR Author Database. This is done after the bibliographic data is keyed, partly by automation, and partly by the perspiration of MR staff. This may not seem remarkable if you think of a dozen colleagues sharing your interests, but consider that the Author Database contains nearly 400,000 distinct authors representing every area of mathematics over more than sixty years.

Collaboration Distance Calculator. A new link has been added to the Author Search in MathSciNet, the Collaboration Distance Calculator. Each author returned by an Author Search has a link next to it that will calculate the distance in the author collaboration graph from the given author to any other author (e.g., Paul Erdős). While mathematicians should find this amusing, it is actually a serious demonstration of the power of the Author Database within the Mathematical Reviews Database.

Tip. When searching for the entries of a given author, begin with the Author Search screen rather than with the Full Search screen. This gives you the power of the underlying Author Database.

Current awareness browsing. The three browsing searches in MathSciNet have been updated to reflect calendar units of time in which content is added to MathSciNet. For example, the user can browse reviews of books added in the current calendar month, or in the previous calendar month. Thus, a monthly program of browsing all the recent additions of book reviews to MathSciNet could be carried out by clicking on *Book reviews entered last month* on any day of the month. The resulting lists collected month by month will be comprehensive and non-overlapping. If a month is missed, simply choose *Book reviews entered 2 months ago*.

FAQ and Improved Help. Help pages have been divided into two levels, with the most basic information at the first level. A new FAQ page has been added.

MathSciNet Trivia. The 7-digit MR Numbers are published roughly (but not exactly) in sequence in MathSciNet. In November 2003 the number MR2000000 appeared. These numbers only “count” the items in the database in a relative way. There are now over 1,950,000 individual entries (items) in the MR Database. Each working day over 350 new bibliographic items are added.

Reviewers Corner. The submission of reviews on the Web has saved MR substantial processing time. A new interface with reviewer personalization will be available by the end of 2004. If you haven't yet submitted your reviews on the Web, give the new interface a try at <http://www.ams.org/mresubs>.