

MathSciNet Matters

The “MathSciNet Matters” column appears in the *Notices* several times a year. It includes 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.

New Features in MathSciNet. One of the goals of this column is to have another medium for telling the community about new features in MathSciNet. We work on an annual development cycle that culminates each year in September with the release of a new version of the Web interface. The new features are described under “What’s New” on the MathSciNet home page (<http://www.ams.org/mathscinet>). The planning for the new interface begins early in each calendar year. While suggestions are appreciated at any time, the best time to send suggestions is probably in the December to February range each year. Use the Support Mail link found at the top of all search pages and help pages.

Keeping Authors Straight. In the January column there was a discussion of the author database, which is an important component of the MR Database. With over 420,000 authors in the database, mistakes of identification can be made. Items can be attributed to two different people with similar names that really belong to one person. Conversely, items can be attributed to one person when in fact they were authored by two different people. These mistakes are straightforward to fix if enough information is provided. Use Support Mail to describe the problem, providing as much information as you know. Data from before 1985 had author work done in an automatic way. When there was ambiguity, items could be attributed to more than one author on the principle that at least one of them was correct. This leads to the result that an author can be his or her own coauthor. We are very appreciative of help from the community with author data.

The New User Profile. The 2005 interface allows for a user profile after sign in. Various things can be saved in this profile, among them the contents of the clipboard, which otherwise vanish after twenty-four hours of inactivity. Various settings on search pages can also be saved. For example, the

default number of headlines, the default language, and whether or not to display and print reference lists.

How Do You View MR? There is a striking stratification by age among mathematicians with respect to their awareness of MR. Those over a certain age (not to be mentioned here) think of MR in terms of oversized orange volumes that at one time they pored over for hours. Those under that certain age think only of MathSciNet. It is worth noting that the “journal of record” is MathSciNet. For example, corrections to reviews are made only in MathSciNet, where a complete record of original and updated versions is maintained. MR is committed to upholding the highest standards of electronic publication.

Factoid. The number of items added to MathSciNet in 2004 was 13 percent greater than for 2003. This number has an implication: more reviewers are needed. Have you considered being a reviewer? It is easy to let us know of your interest. Send email to mathrev@ams.org. This is a very important service to the community.

Reviewers Corner. The MR Reception is an annual event at the Joint Mathematics Meetings. It is



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always a good time, and 2005 in Atlanta was no exception. There were refreshments, many reviewers in attendance, a contest on MR Database trivia with AMS gift certificates as prizes, and a slide show with pictures from previous receptions and all aspects of MR. One of the attendees was Andrew Bucki, who for a number of years has been the most prolific reviewer. In 2004 he submitted seventy-one reviews. All reviewers are warmly invited to stop by the MR Reception at the 2006 Meetings in San Antonio.

—Norman Richert
Administrative Editor, Mathematical Reviews