Bob Baldwin, Editor

I just returned from a trip on the Internet to research some topics for this and future issues. As usual, I came back both delighted and frustrated: Delighted by some of my finds and frustrated by roadblocks put up by well-meaning webmasters.

Here are a couple of business finds. As a starter, you can't beat www.ceoexpress.com. It has all the best news and business links arranged compactly by categories on one page. It can also be personalized to include some special categories to which you can add your favorite sites, which I hope includes ours: www.mt-online.com.

My Web browser is now set to automatically bring up the ceoexpress page when it opens. One of the sites linked to that page is www.findspot.com, which provides some valuable help for using search engines to track down information.

One of my maintenance finds was MotorMaster+, the electric motor management software and database developed by the Washington State University Energy Program for the U.S. Department of Energy.

The software, which can be operated from the Motor Challenge site www.motor.doe.gov/mmplus, or downloaded, allows the user to peruse a 17,500 record database of electric motors in various sizes and configurations from a variety of manufacturers. Data includes efficiency and other parameters including retail price.

When I saw the field for motor price, I was reminded of how the Internet is changing the way people buy things. It has certainly revolutionized automobile purchasing. I can remember the feeling of power I had a decade or so ago when I walked into the dealership armed with "secret" dealer invoice information from our company's friendly leasing agent. Today, that power is available freely on the Web at a number of sites. Just check auto links in the "tools, travel, and fun" section at the bottom of the ceoexpress page to get started.

I am also reminded of a quip by a marketing and sales strategist at an automobile company: "Online car-buyers are a savvy bunch and are privy to information never before available to them. In a very short period of time, the last stupid customer is going to walk through our dealership doors." Although we are not there yet with electric motors and most other goods for industry, we are headed in the right direction. And what else should we expect to see someday on the Internet? Check out the thoughts of Blaine Pardoe, our newest Viewpoint columnist. **MT**