The Internet never ceases to amaze me. This great “thing” is owned by no company and controlled by no government, and it just keeps getting better and better.

Every Web publisher is self-appointed but ultimately is voted on and validated by Web surfers—for without surfers, there is no real point to publishing. AOL, MSN, and Yahoo! all make it easy to set up blogs, groups, and personal Web sites so anyone can add his voice to the Internet. You do not need fancy graphics to have a great Web site; in fact, simple site designs are often more appreciated by visitors. Two such sites are listed below.

I recently came across e-reliability.com (no, it is not one of my sites) created and managed by Sy Friedman, president of Probabilistic Software. Its claim to fame is that it does not sell you software to create mean time between failure (MTBF) and mean time to repair (MTTR) and other availability and reliability reports. It actually creates the reports for you right online—instantly.

An “Instant MTTR” is the MTTR and availability (Ai) of your equipment delivered instantly in a Maintainability and Availability Prediction Report. The report is prepared in accordance with MIL-HDBK-472, Notice 1, Procedure V, Method A, “Maintainability Prediction;” and MIL-STD-470B, “Maintainability Program for Systems and Equipment,” Task 203, “Maintainability Predictions.”

All you need to do is enter average corrective maintenance task times for each replaceable assembly in your equipment. It’s that simple. The site processes your data, enters it into a Maintainability and Availability Prediction Report, and e-mails it to you within minutes.

The report you will receive includes a title page, table of contents, introduction and summary, resulting MTTR value, maximum corrective maintenance time (Mmaxct) value, availability (Ai) value, mathematical models supporting these values, and a MIL-HDBK-472 and MIL-STD-470B methodology discussion. The Maintainability Prediction Report also contains an appendix which presents the “Maintainability Analysis Worksheet” tabulations showing the average corrective maintenance task times that support the MTTR and availability calculations. There is a cost of $500 for this service.

If you are too busy to fill out the “Instant MTTR” data input sheets and want assistance, just send your equipment packaging design to e-reliability.com and they will do it for you and send you the report within a few days. Report examples are available in pdf format so you can preview what you will get.

If you would rather learn more about developing your own reports, you need to be a regular visitor to H. Paul Barringer’s Web site . In addition to information about consulting and training services, this site offers a boatload of handy reliability tools as well as a lot of free or low-cost software downloads.

Sign up for the reliability problem of the month to keep your reliability wits in shape and fine tuned (you will need them fine tuned to keep up with Barringer).

You will also find a link to Eagle Eye services which gets Weibull guru Dr. Robert Abernathy or Wes Fulton to review your problem data quickly and provide expert comments, conclusions, and recommendations. This service may lead to significant improvements in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Use sites like these to help develop your statistical skills This type of information is often overlooked by maintenance professionals who may lack the proper math skills or have not been trained in how to apply statistical analysis methods in the maintenance context. New software and services can help even the most number challenged of us get value from our data.

Terrence O’Hanlon, CMRP, is the publisher of ReliabilityWeb.com . He is the director of strategic alliances for the Society for Maintenance & Reliability Professionals (SMRP). He is also the event manager for RCM-2005 , The Reliability Centered Maintenance Managers’ Forum on March 9-11, 2005 in Clearwater, FL

Free Office Software on the Web

Are you tired of paying hundreds of dollars for word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software?

Visit E-Press to download a free copy of Easy Office 7.0 or check out my favorite OpenOffice.org 1.1.2.. If all you need is word processing, try AbiWord 2.0 or Jarte. For presentation software, try Powerbullet Presenter. dbWorx is a very capable database program.

If you have been computing since the 1980s like I have and certain editors of MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY, you may remember VisiCalc. It serves well as a simple spreadsheet and, best of all, it's free.

Send the money you save to a worthy charity!

Internet Tip: New E-mail Client Available

I have written about alternative browsers to Internet Explorer in the past because of all the security issues surrounding Microsoft products. Thunderbird, from Mozilla , is an excellent no-cost alternative to Outlook. It even includes effective junk mail filters and RSS features so you can get blogs like www.maintenancetalk.com and news delivered directly to your e-mail. Try a copy and e-mail us to let us know what you think.