Ever since the dot com bomb, some companies have been content to simply allow their corporate Web sites to serve as a collection of electronic brochures.

Unfortunately for the companies that have not converted to value-based information delivery, the meltdown of hyped up, over-inflated Internet stock prices did nothing to slow the real benefits of connecting computers and, more importantly, people from around the world.

The Internet forecasts made in 1999 have now been borne out as e-commerce has expanded to well over $100 billion in 2003 (a year behind the prediction). The number of computers with Internet access in 2003 actually exceeded 1999 predictions with 633 million people now online.

Nearly half of U. S. Internet users have built Web pages, posted photos, written comments, or otherwise added to the enormous variety of material available online, according to a report released last month by the Pew Internet and American Life Project.

As some companies squander the opportunity to create online relationships based on value, the Internet continues to fulfill its promise of changing the way information is distributed. Information flows like water around “roadblocks” and those companies that are not in the “information flow” simply get navigated around as Web surfers find their way to more helpful resources.

Sites deliver value

That said, creating and maintaining a useful Web site is a big job. Reliabilityweb.com announces the Top 100 list of maintenance and reliability Web sites each year as a way of delivering value to readers and as a way of acknowledging the extra work that these companies put into creating Web sites that contribute to the overall maintenance and reliability community.

We hope to encourage other companies that publish Web sites to follow these fine examples as well as ask current Top 100 site publishers to continue adding even more value to their Web sites on a consistent basis. When it comes to delivering maintenance and reliability

information, there is still a long way to go.

The following criteria are evaluated before a site is selected for the Reliabilityweb.com Top 100 list:

- Web site must be nominated.
- Web site must offer valuable maintenance and/or reliability information.
- Accessing this information must be fee free.

The Reliabilityweb.com Top 100 Web sites are ranked by link popularity, as value exists only in the mind of the visitor. The list is generally assembled in the order we receive the nominations and they are included on our list after being reviewed. The order changes as more people click the online resources they find most useful.

Increase in number of sites

Things are definitely progressing from 2000 when we had a difficult time finding 50 Web sites that met the criteria for the list. It is heartening that we received more than 200 new nominations and many sites had some positive information benefit for visitors beyond product or service information.

The Top 100 listings happen without any communication with the Web site owners or operators and there is no obligation on anyone's part to take any further action. Some companies choose to display a Top 100 logo and others simply continue with their good work.

A complete list of the Top 100 maintenance and reliability Web sites is available online at www.reliabilityweb.com/forms/rw100_list.htm, including a link to nominate your favorite Web sites for next year's list. You can even nominate your own site if you think it meets the criteria.

Yahoo, Google, and other search engines are fine, but lists like the Reliabilityweb.com Top 100 can provide a more focused starting point that will speed your way through the search engine clutter to more applicable solutions.

Please help us recognize your favorite maintenance and reliability Web sites by nominating them for our next Top 100 list. **MT**

Internet Tip: Find Yourself

Have you ever searched for yourself on the Internet? Try typing your name in at Google , and you may be surprised to find out where you can be found.

This can be a good exercise to make sure you are not revealing more personal information (i.e., your home address or phone number) than you would like. If you find more information than you are comfortable with, send a polite e-mail requesting that information be removed. Most responsible Web site operators will be happy to comply.

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