

## For Latest Research Results, Go to Info Finder

**Info Finder, a new, one-stop internet search resource, provides instant access to the latest reports on agriculture, economic development, hunger, poverty, and the environment from all 16 Future Harvest centers, the Secretariat of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).**

Launched officially on May 21, 2002, the day it was activated on all 16 Future Harvest center websites and the day IFPRI Computer Services head Nancy Walczak presented it to a meeting of Future Harvest center directors, FAO staff, and others in Rome, the Info Finder retrieves documents and websites with direct links to the full texts of downloadable publications.

It took just 12 months to get Info Finder ready, a feat Walczak says would not have been possible without the commitment of FAO. "This was a wheel FAO had already invented," Walczak points out. "All the centers had to do was adapt it to meet center needs and then enter their electronically available resources." Now, visitors can access material easily by author, title, or subject from the entire CGIAR system and FAO.

In addition to the unprecedented collaboration Info Finder inaugurated between the CGIAR system and FAO, the project catalyzed cooperation between and within the Future Harvest centers at the CGIAR. IFPRI's own experience spearheading the Info Finder project epitomizes the synergies that are possible when people bridge turf or disciplinary barriers. Walczak, a computer expert, teamed with IFPRI head librarian Luz Marina Alvaré to forge a new working relationship between information managers and information technologists. With funding from FAO, the CGIAR Secretariat, and the CGIAR's Organizational Change Program, they hosted a workshop at IFPRI in March 2002.



*Dr. V. N. Misra, a visiting researcher from India, discovers how to navigate the Info Finder.*

"We need the know-how of information technologists to make the new search engine function smoothly. But information managers know how to categorize and index information best," Alvaré says. "Working together, we combined our expertise in knowledge management with Computer Services' technical savvy. And, by asking IFPRI researchers to experiment with the system and provide feedback, we incorporated the needs of the people who use it. This could not have been accomplished by any single expert working alone," she says.

Info Finder is a work-in-progress that solicits and benefits from user feedback. "For example," Alvaré says, "when people used popular words, like 'peanut,' to search Info Finder, they got few results, because 'groundnut' and 'Arachis,' the scientific terms, were used for indexing. So we are creating fields that reflect more

popular names, which will make Info Finder more accessible to the concerned public." Information is continually being uploaded to the Info Finder's database, which currently contains over 3,400 center entries, of which 500 are IFPRI's.

"The web is a powerful component of the Communications Division's public dissemination strategy," Media Relations head Michael Rubinstein says. "Now, people can go directly to IFPRI's cutting-edge research with just a click of the mouse. This convenient new tool allows scientists, journalists, activists, and students to find the best research in just a few easy steps. Info Finder is a great opportunity to reach new audiences with IFPRI research."

