

Participants at the workshop on  
"Observing Stellar Systems"  
photographed in the garden at ESO  
Vitacura.



were presented, while several contributions highlighted the importance of combining *in situ* spacecraft missions of the planets and small bodies of our Solar System with ground-based supporting observations (Cassini/Titan, Rosetta/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, Mars space missions). Although we are still lacking evidence for the presence of life outside the Earth, the discussions generated during this four-day workshop deepened our belief that the search for signatures of life in our own Solar System will provide strong guidance to the future exploration of exoplanetary systems.

### Summary

On purpose we opted not to publish printed proceedings of this workshop. In-

stead, all contributions, both oral and poster, were made available for download immediately after the workshop from the conference website (<http://www.sc.eso.org/santiago/science/OPSWorkshop>) – given the consent of the authors. This decision was based on our belief that providing instant access to the research highlights presented during this meeting was more useful than waiting for printed proceedings in a competitive field like this one, where results are rapidly evolving and will be published in refereed journals. The idea to provide near-instantaneous access to the material discussed in this workshop was developed even further by providing, experimentally, a live-stream webcast during the conference (video-streams are also available for download on the conference website). We also believe that the costs saved have been

well invested in making an attractive programme, and supporting some participants to enable their visit in Chile. In total about 40 % of the participants received some financial aid; half were students, half researchers, and all students had their registration fees waived.

We would like to thank ESO for allocating the financial support for this workshop, and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile its co-sponsoring. Also, we would like to thank all people who made this workshop possible, in particular Maria-Eugenia Gomez, our librarian who acted as workshop secretary, the ESO-Chile administration for the logistical support received, and the students from the Universidad Católica de Chile, who helped during the four days of this workshop, notably at the time of the registration. The flawless local organisation, the highly praised coffee breaks (including delicious appetisers), joint cocktails and conference dinner all contributed to a warm and friendly atmosphere during the workshop, remembered by all participants.

While meetings of this quality and size take place naturally in many research institutes in Europe and North America, ESO Vitacura largely lacks this experience and we are looking forward to future workshops of this kind organised within our premises.

## The Re-launch of the ESO Web

Rein Warmels, Gabriele Zech (ESO)

Recently, the ESO Web went through a major revision and was re-launched with a new Look and Feel and new navigation tools. This article gives an overview of why and how the ESO Web has changed.

The ESO Web plays an integral and indispensable role in the process of doing science with ESO's observing and archive facilities. It provides an effective and adaptive medium for exchanging information, documents and images between scientists, engineers, the media and the general public. Furthermore, it provides various services to the community of users of ESO's observing facilities

and is critical for coordination and dissemination of information, both internal and external to ESO, in particular in the area of science and archive operations.

The ESO Web started its service in 1994. Since then it has expanded rapidly, both in the amount of information and services that are provided as well as in terms of access rates. Currently, the statistics

show that on average 100 000 pages are viewed per month, representing a data transfer volume of the order of 20 Gbytes.

In spite of the information and services that have been added to the ESO Web continuously over the past years, its structure has not been adapted; the 'Look and Feel' still reflected the predominantly science-oriented approach and usage of the ESO Web in the mid-nineties. Since then ESO's observing facilities have been greatly enlarged: Paranal has become fully operational, the concept of service observing was introduced to maximise the operational efficiency and scientific productivity, and the ESO/ECF Science Archive and Virtual Observatory archival research facilities are being offered. In addition, over the past years a large number of science collaborations and projects, and public outreach programmes, were initiated.

New information and services were added arbitrarily to the old structure and could not easily be integrated into the existing navigation. Consequently, the ESO Web became increasingly complex, barely maintainable and it became increasingly difficult to store new information and services that would be easy to find and use.

In particular, the start of science operations of the VLT and its scientific results triggered a substantial increase in the awareness of ESO amongst the public and the media and, consequently, a noticeable change of user profile of the ESO Web. Meanwhile, nearly every private citizen has Internet access and expects that information can be found easily. To support this new aspect of Internet usage, which includes the requirement to present ESO's activities to the general public, ESO's Web presence had clearly to be revised and improved.

During the past months ESO's Public Affairs Department (PAD) has been working on a new ESO Web. This work was done in collaboration with the IT Department. It was guided by the conclusions and recommendations of an internal working group, taking into account that over time the overall user profile has changed significantly. In this sense ESO is following other organisations, such as CERN, in

adapting to the fact that the large majority of web users are from the public domain. Other objectives for making a new ESO web included:

- improve the appearance, i.e. give the ESO Web a more modern 'Look and Feel';
- improve the navigation and provide more functionality;
- improve page content, in particular make sure that the content is up-to-date. Remove old and outdated pages and information;
- restructure the site to serve the different user groups more efficiently;
- find and assign responsible persons for well-defined areas.

The new ESO Web has three major user areas:

1. Public. This area is intended for the general public, press and media, (potential) industrial partners and people interested in working at ESO. The area is completely new, partially based on existing information, but also with new content.
2. Science Users. The area is intended for professional astronomers who are doing, or are planning to do, research using ESO facilities.
3. Intranet. This area is for ESO Staff only.

The new Look and Feel has been implemented throughout the whole Public area (ESO for the Public – see Figure 1) and includes information of general interest. Examples are descriptions of ESO's

observing facilities and the astronomy programmes using these facilities, contact and travel information, ESO's public affairs' activities (including information for press and media), the new ESO Public Image Archive (Figure 2), as well as information for ESO's industrial partners and about current vacancies.

The Science area (Science Users Information) provides information and services for professional astronomers covering ESO's observing and archive facilities. Examples are instrument information, Phase I proposal submission, policies and procedures, service observing and data processing. Also information about science activities, science meetings, the library, and publications can be found here. In the Science area pages at the top navigation levels have been implemented with the new Look and Feel. Lower level pages that are still in the old format will be converted later.

Most of the information in the Intranet area is still in the old layout. It is intended that also in this area the new Look and Feel will be implemented.

The new structure of the ESO Web is reflected in the navigation bar to the left and the breadcrumb navigation at the top of each page. The main areas of Public, Science, and Intranet can be accessed via separate buttons. Each area has its own navigation menu that helps the user to easily find the information or service of interest.



Figure 1: The new ESO home page (Public Area).

In the current implementation the ESO Web still consists of many single web pages that use a common style and navigation. In the near future it is planned to move to a database-based Content Management System. This will substantially improve maintainability of the site and will serve all web users with the most current information and a common Look and Feel.



**Figure 2:** The new ESO Public Image Archive. The page shows the overview of galaxy images currently available

# Fellows at ESO

Maria Messineo

I have been an ESO fellow since September 2004. I am interested in studying the morphology and evolution of the Milky Way. Although it is well established that our Galaxy is a barred spiral galaxy, the properties of each Galactic component – Disc, Halo, Bulge, central Bar – are still poorly constrained. It is difficult to properly map the large-scale morphology of the Milky Way, mainly because we observe it from inside the Disc and because light absorption from interstellar dust strongly hampers an unbiased view of its stellar content.

Like Archimedes, I grew up on the ancient and wonderful island of Sicily. I started to study astronomy at the University of Bologna where I graduated in the spring of the 1997 with a Master's Thesis on Galactic globular stellar clusters. I did my Ph.D. research in Leiden studying the distribution of stars in the inner regions of our Galaxy as a direct probe of the gravitational potential.



Maria Messineo

During my Ph.D. I went observing with the IRAM 30-m telescope in Spain several times as well as with the Heinrich Hertz Telescope in Arizona, with the ESO 3.6-m and the CTIO 4-m telescopes in Chile. I always enjoyed my time at the telescopes very much, and so it was obvious that when I joined ESO I would perform my functional work as a sup-

port astronomer on Paranal. At Paranal I mostly work with the UT4-Yepun telescope and operate both of the infrared detectors: NACO and SINFONI. I really enjoy observing and supporting visiting astronomers during their runs, and each time I learn a lot, both scientifically and technically, and receive valuable feedback concerning my research.

Currently I am investigating the spatial distribution of young stellar clusters in the Milky Way using SINFONI data. The aim of this project is to better understand the current star formation in our Galaxy, as well as the locations of spiral arms. From next July I will continue to work on this topic at the Rochester Institute of Technology (USA): more science to carry out and a new world to discover!