



**MicroModule: date**

**REVIEW Page**

Below is the entire module on one page.



**Why would you want to know when a web page was created or updated?**

The 'currency' or 'freshness' of the information may be vital to your search. If you are looking for statistics, news about terrorism, or current scientific research, information published in 1995 may not be as valuable as data from 2004.

On the other hand, if you are seeking less time sensitive information, the date of publication may not be important.

**Remember:** many times information on the web is not updated after it is originally published. It is up to the searcher to decide if the date of publication is an important element in their search.

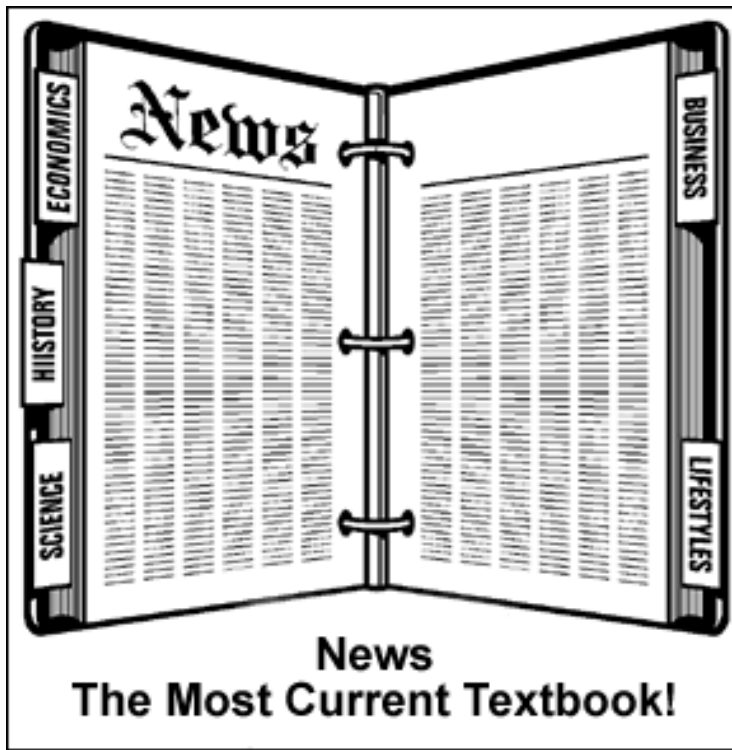
**How can you find out when a web page was created or updated?**

A copyright date tells you the year the page was created. This date, or a date that is associated with a revision are preferred sources for the publication date. Look at the bottom of a web page to see if the author has indicated when the page was last updated. Authors and webmasters typically put copyright, revision and update information at the bottom of the page.

**What does 'updated' really mean?**

Many web page authors use an script that automatically displays the date when a page has been updated. This gives you, the searcher, some idea of how fresh or current the page is. However an update may as simple as a font change, a spelling fix, or the addition of a new link. We can't assume, based on the date alone, that the content of the page has been significantly revised. The date is just one element

in the evaluation of a web resource.



### **Technical Methods to detect the date of a webpage.**

Some webpages have no date. You'll look in vain for a copyright, revision or update stamp. When this happens you'll need a detective's mind set to ferret out any publication date information.

There are technical methods to help you find out the date that the page was last changed on the server. When you can't find copyright, revision, or update information, these methods can be useful. However, it is important to understand that the server based update information, changes whenever even a minor change is made on the page.

### **Internet Explorer:**

Checking the properties page in Internet Explorer can be misleading since you'll always get today's date, rather than the publication date. However *most* webservers can be persuaded to send you update information...*if you ask the right way!* You can extract the date information when using Internet Explorer by entering a javascript code in the Address Box of the browser when the page is displayed. Just click in the Address Box, erase the current URL and paste in the code.

### **Here's the code:**

- javascript:alert(document.lastModified)

1) Select the URL in the Address Box.

Lets demonstrate this technique using the [ALA Issues and Advocacy Page](http://www.ala.org/ala/issues/issuesadvocacy.htm).

We have solid date of publication information because the ALA supplies a copyright date at the bottom of the page That date reads 2004.

By using this technique we can get an even more accurate date!



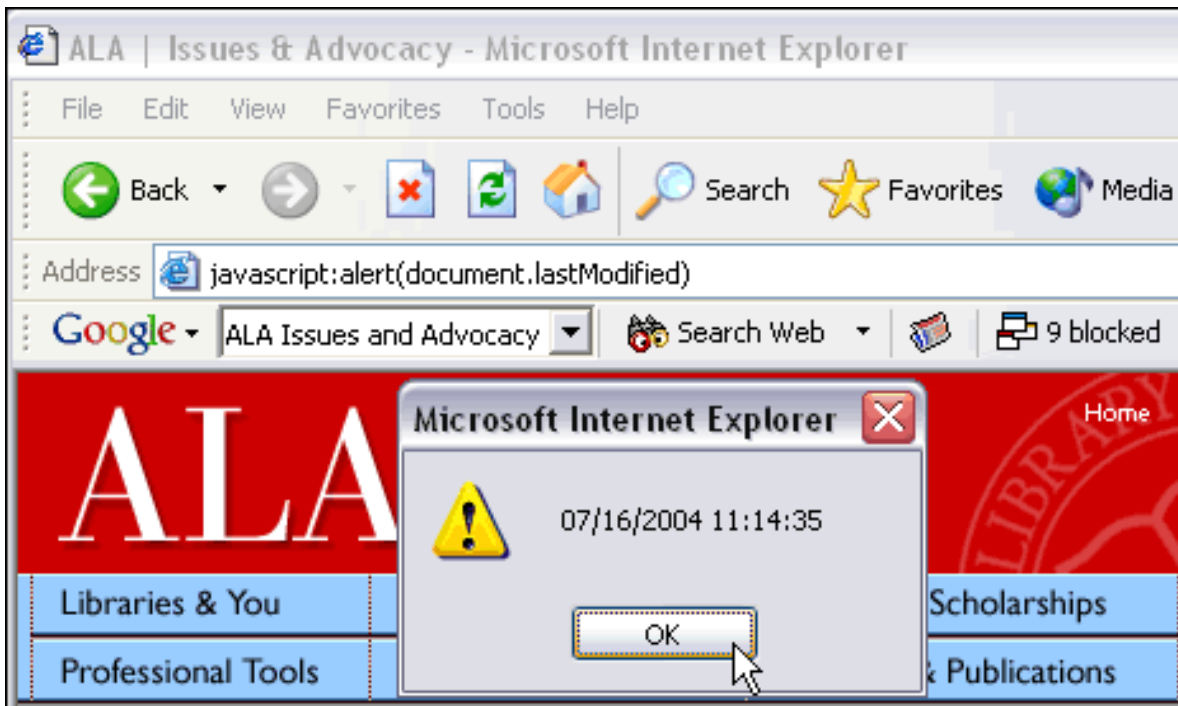
2) Paste in the script.



Replace the URL in the Address Box with the javascript. You can type in the script or paste in the script.

When you hit enter this script will fetch the date of the most recent change to this page.

3) Detect the Date!

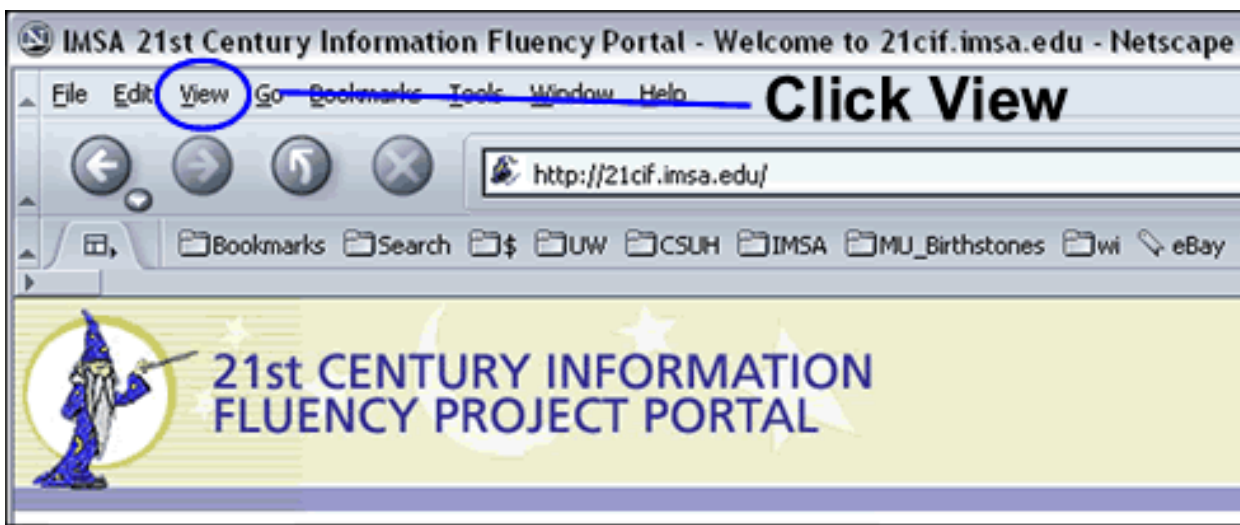


After hitting enter, the most current server based update is revealed.

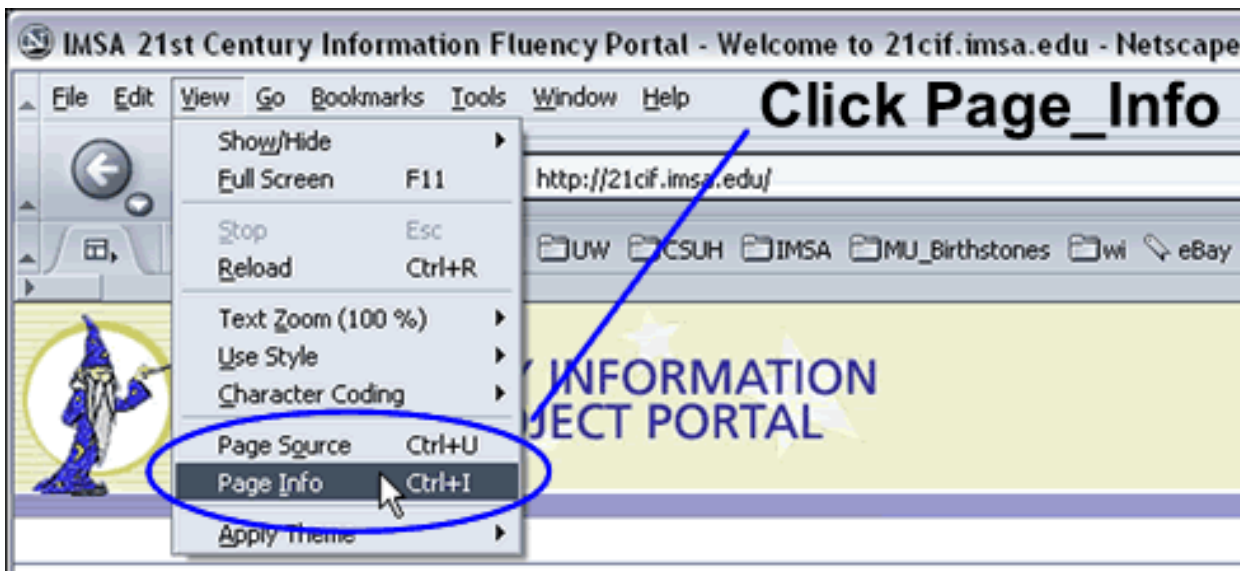
We see that the date is about mid-year 2004. This helps us establish the freshness or currency of the page we are

## Netscape:

If you are using the Netscape browser, you can use the "Page Info" option under the View menu to see information about when the document was last modified on the server where it resides.



1) Click the View Menu.

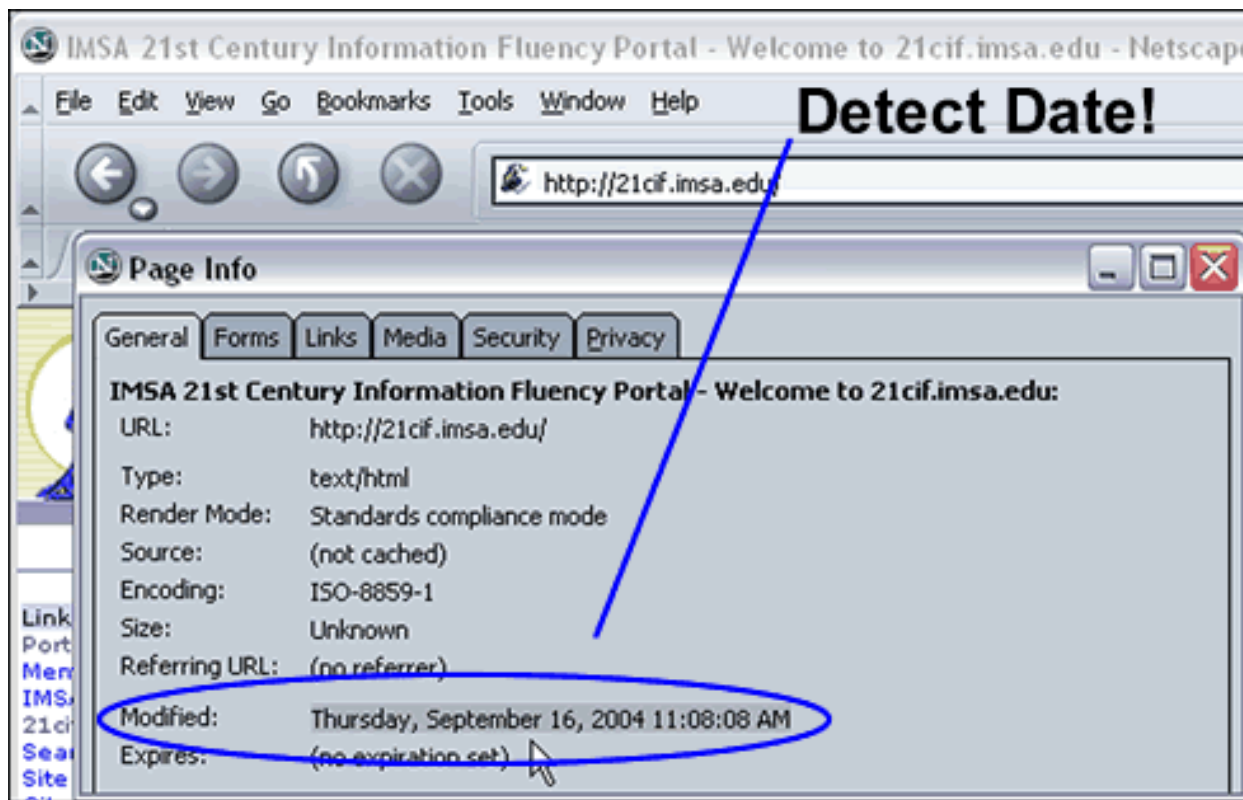


2) Click Page Info.

(Alternately you can use the keyboard command, Control + I.)

### 3) Detect Date.

Finally, you can detect the date the page was last modified. Understand that this date reflects the last time any modification was done. A change in graphics or a spelling correction are more likely than a substantial update to the information content of the page.



This technical method of determining the publication date is useful, but not as accurate as an official

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*End of Micromodule - date.*

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