

# **THE USE OF INTERNET RESOURCES IN POLYMER SCIENCE EDUCATION: POTENTIAL PITFALLS OF THE “FACILITATOR” APPROACH**

Albert van Reenen

Department of Chemistry and Polymer Science, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

## **ABSTRACT**

The explosion of knowledge, or rather information, on the internet has lead to an approach where teaching of a specific topic has, in many cases, devolved into a facilitator approach. This means that it is assumed that the amount of freely available information on the internet is such that it is no longer necessary for lecturers/professors to teach in the traditional way. It is deemed that it is no longer necessary, or even desirable, to present students with lecture materials.

In the past few decades the teaching of Polymer Science as a subject has gone from a “new” science to a mature subject. While the numbers of textbooks have remained fairly constant, new materials have been developed as online courses and free-to-use sources. Many of these are excellent sources, and have been developed by recognized, well-respected institutions. Sadly, many others are not. The lack of peer review in the field of free-to-use materials available today makes the use of the internet as a source of creditable information and facts for the modern polymer science student a veritable minefield of disinformation and half-truths.

This talk will present some examples of information that is available that is patently wrong, and will also focus on possible solutions to this problem.