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From the Editor

Which IUPAC book has a nickname, color, author, and now URL that are the same? The answer is the Gold Book, i.e. the *Compendium of Chemical Terminology*.

The compendium, first published in 1987, had a gold colored cover, and the first author/compiler was Victor Gold. Gold deserves the credit for initiating this project and contributing to the compilation of terms and their definitions. Unfortunately, Victor Gold passed away in September 1985, just a few months before the first edition was finally completed. The work was later completed by Kurt Loening, Alan McNaught, and Pamil Sehmi. The compendium was soon popularized as the Gold Book in recognition of Gold's initial work.

The book was a hit as soon as it was published and plans were made to expand the compendium by including new and revised definitions recommended by various specialized groups within IUPAC. In 1998, when the second edition was published, the book cover was again gold, and Alan McNaught was again one of the compilers along with Andrew Wilkinson. At this stage, the compendium included nearly 7 000 terms.

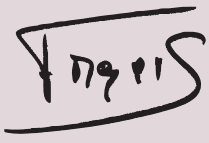
A couple of years after the second edition was released, the book was made available online as a collection of PDF files. Everyone was now just a few keystroke away from the compendium and all its definitions. This was quite an achievement at the time, one that was possible thanks to the help of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Today, following the continuous growth in web technologies, we can all look at the Gold Book in a whole new light ... an XML version was recently completed—a copy of which is provided to you on the enclosed CD.

Turn to page 28 for details about this brand new product. The contributions of Miloslav Nic, Jiri Jirat, and Bedrich Kosata in transforming the compendium into a contemporary tool are remarkable. This achievement is clearly deserving of great appreciation from IUPAC and the chemistry community.

One of the most valuable functions of the XML technology is the easy linkage between definitions and the multitude of indexes. XML allows for regrouping of entries according to structures, physical constants, symbols, acronyms, etc—all generated automatically.

As it so happened, the release of version 1.0.0 of the XML Gold Book was completed on 29 September 2006—the 21st anniversary of Victor Gold's death. In his lifetime Gold could not have dreamed of all the improvements now added to the compendium he initiated, but I suspect that today he would have approved!



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Cover: This SeaWiFS image of the global biosphere was taken in May 2002. In the oceans, the regions with increasing phytoplankton abundance and higher chlorophyll-a concentrations are shown in lighter blues, greens, yellows, and reds. Source: http://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov.