

News, Trends and Comments

News

U.S. vendor to cross Atlantic

Systems Development Corporation, SDC, one of the major online vendors, have announced their intention to establish a Europe-based service. In a joint venture with Derwent, they will offer Derwent and, later, other databases, also for access via Euronet. This is an important development in the online field, since the American spinners have been barred from Euronet because of 'technical reasons' which are generally believed to be political.

Catalog via two-way cable

Libraries, cable television networkers and data base producer Dow Jones are planning to utilize a two way cable system for the distribution of catalog information. Using BRS software, the system would allow a library (Princeton Public) to distribute information on new titles and bestseller listings to the cable network.

PRESTEL unimpressive

PRESTEL was the subject of negative comments in a recent conference where Efreem Sigel reported that of the 5400 PRESTEL customers who came into the hookup last fall, only about 1700 were in residences. Sigel noted that PRESTEL'S access technique involves excessive recourse to index after index and that this part of the search process was not economically appealing at the consumer level.

New, free journal

TELEMATICS is the name of a new journal which you can get free of charge from Information Gatekeepers Inc., 167 Corey Road, Brooklyn, MA 02146, USA. It's nice, but American. Nevertheless, useful unless you are so loaded with paper that you cannot read anything!

Databases

ISI will offer three new databases: BIOMED, ISTO&B and CompuMath. If you are interested, contact the Institute for Scientific Information, 3501 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

U.S. gets first careers data base from The Source. Comprising both resumes of candidates and job descriptions, the data base is supported by a number of recruiting firms who pay a membership fee to the data base compiler, Computer Search International (CSI) of Baltimore, MD, U.S.A. Security procedures are featured in the system in order to safeguard corporate clients while matching of applicant skills and other data is accomplished by normal search techniques.

DIALOG has added Congressional Information Service (CIS) Index to its' roll of databases as has SDC-ORBIT. Document delivery in paper or microfiche form is provided by CIS from the more than 140000 records of U.S. Congress committee publications and legislation since 1970.

Our correspondent reports attendance at NICE was about 1/3 less than prior meetings (NICE 4 etc.). While exhibits were up to earlier levels, the hall was empty (or nearly so) much of the time. National Online Meeting in New York shortly before also seemed a little thin. Bad times or too many meetings or just bad scheduling?

"Hit" of both meetings was Pergamon International's new VIDEO PATSEARCH utilizing videodisc to display patent drawings, diagrams etc. Linked with the PATSEARCH file on BRS, VIDEO PATSEARCH requires a complex of hardware, software, and of course the disc. Eight in number, each can hold 50000 drawings and allow matchup of graphics for 700000 U.S. patents issued since 1971.

ARTEMIS

In our first issue we reported on the CEC-workshop on electronic document delivery. The pertaining report has now been published: J.R.U. Page (ed.), Electronic document delivery, Proceedings of an exhibition and workshop, Luxemburg, 18-19 December 1980, CEC, Directorate-General XIII, Luxemburg, 1981. We assume that this 245-page volume can be obtained from the Commission.

Conferences

If you like travelling and your bosses do not object, you will be busy in the next conference season:

VIDCOM 81 has been announced: Cannes, October 9–13. The organizers call it the first International Market for Telematics and Data Banks. Further details:

VIDCOM 81
179, Avenue Victor Hugo
75116 Paris.

Fast travelling is then required to get to EUSIDIC's Annual Conference at Berne, Switzerland, October 13–15. This year the programme is more than just information retrieval: lectures on videotex, electronic publishing, computer conferencing, electronic mail etc. illustrate the widening of the traditional information field. Contact:

Professor C.W. Cleverdon
Executive Secretary
EUSIDIC
Rose Cottage
Moulsoe
Newport Pagnell, Bucks.
England.

Finally, a large telecommunications fair and conference will be held at Cologne, Germany, 4–6 November.

IFCOM
Mr. Norbert Wysokowski
Messe- und Ausstellungs-GmbH Köln
P.O. Box 210760
D-5000 Cologne 21
Germany.

Trends

Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) and BioSciences Information Service (BIOSIS) have announced a joint venture in the current awareness publishing area. BIOSIS/CAS Selects will initially cover fourteen topics of biochemical and biomedical interest. Appearing bi-weekly, the new series has a price tag of \$100 per year and is said to cover, without duplication, more than 15000 journals, monographs and books. which would make it the largest scope SDI service ever offered. Hints of things to come?

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has made a number of interesting proposals affecting the U.S. information scene. Outstanding is one proposal to diminish the proliferation of Federal information activities which unnecessarily compete with private industry and duplicate both government and private activities.

Additionally OMB has indicated that the more than 1200 'depository' libraries

should provide 'free citizen access' to documents. In assigning this role to the libraries, OMB indicated that NTIS should index scientific and technical information produced with Federal funds, a shift in NTIS' traditional document dissemination function.

U.S. 'Lending Library' stumbles on

Latest chapter in the long non-history of the U.S. National Periodical Center comes from a compromise offered to create an independent non-profit corporation. The corporation is to assess its own feasibility against recommendations made by the consultants A.D. Little against the system concept in the summer or 1980.

Information becomes biological?

U.S. National Science Foundation has announced (finally) that the Division of Information Science and Technology has been transferred to the Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences Directorate under a general reorganization of the NSF. With this step, the slow process diminishing the old Office of Science Information under Burt Adkinson which reigned in the 50's is almost complete. Drastic budget cuts (more than 50%) took place under Adkinson's successor, Lee Burchinal, and the transition from science information to information science under Howard Resnikoff was a source of controversy in the U.S. It will remain to be seen what the remnants of budget and organization will develop in the future. The move became official on March 8, 1981.

LEXIS, NEXIS and ROG

Reports are abroad that the Mead Data Central (MDC) LEXIS/NEXIS network will be interlinked to DIALOG in the near future. This will open a large new market to DIALOG data bases and poses an interesting educational challenge both to DIALOG and its' data base providers. Of course the opposite course will be interesting as DIALOG users will have to learn MDC capabilities and files. Undoubtedly there will be much more on this in the months to come.

Videotex's uncertain future

Videotex-systems, like PRESTEL, are the parade-horses of some pseudo-monopolistic PTT's. However, their wonderful technological image still has to become true. There is severe doubt whether they will survive: domestic users are hardly interested, waiting for interesting databases which cannot be loaded onto

the system because of the low number of prospective users. For business use there seems to be a real market, but the recently announced tariffs for PRESTEL INTERNATIONAL have not alleviated our fears that Videotex is a solution waiting for problems. The technology may well have been three years early... .

Comments

Interested in writing a review?

We have got a copy of NRCd Publication no. 15: T.J. Morgan, *Word processing and office printing*. Looks good, but we need an expert to write a review and keep the report. Interested? Please, write us.

Wisecrack

Taken from the very readable I.I.S.-SIG Word Processing Newsletter, Febr. 1981: Word processing is a means of communicating information from the mouth of one manager to the wastepaper basket of another manager without it passing through the mind of either.
