

News, Trends and Comments

News

Export to USA

Part of a press release from Pergamon Infoline:

"At the official opening of Pergamon Infoline's new computer facility on 4th March 1982, Mr. Robert Maxwell, Chairman of Pergamon Infoline, announced the availability of the Infoline service in North America. The United States, the home of online services which have for so long dominated the European Market, is to be the target of this bold new marketing initiative by Pergamon, using its London-based computer.

The first database to be offered by Infoline in the US market is the exclusive Pergamon PATSEARCH File of US patents and selected patents from 29 other countries. Mr. Maxwell stated: 'Our decision to withdraw the PATSEARCH database from the New York online service where it has been doing well in the US market for nearly two years and offer it worldwide exclusively from our own computer in London demonstrates our determination to be a world force in the growing online information industry'.

Infoline service will be available 17 hours each day covering the normal working day in most of Europe and the US. Pricing will be competitive with similar US services in spite of transatlantic telecommunications charges."

This is virtually the re-import of American information in a digested form, and the first attempt to penetrate the US on-line market by a European host.

Telecommunication tariffs in Germany

As in other countries, there are some noises in Germany about liberalization of the telecommunications monopoly. At the same time, however, the German Bundespost has announced a new tariff structure (of course, incorporating a volume component) which will discourage the use of private leased lines for data communication. Also the French PTT has raised its tariffs for leased lines rather abruptly.

International copyright study scheduled by USA

King Research Inc. has been awarded a contract by the US Copyright Office to investigate cost-benefit aspects of legal procedures required by the US copyright law. A comparative study will involve data collected in the UK, Sweden and France.

Reagan budget spells finis to many publications

More than 900 publications have been terminated for the fiscal year beginning in 1981, and word reaches us that data bases such as TVA Fertilizer Abstracts will soon follow. Information types include the likes of Commerce Department Library Bulletin, and Environmental Data and Information Service Magazine.

An information network for chemical compounds

Recently in Japan, various ministries, academic centers and industries made a move to combine their efforts in order to establish an information network for chemical compounds. When the 'Council for Science and Technology' (members are ministers and leading experts; Chairman is the Prime Minister; the secretariat is with the Science and Technology Agency) established last year in March priorities concerning coordination of scientific and technological activities, the establishment of an information network for chemical compounds was accepted as one of seven new topics to receive funds for promotion. Starting with 1981, some 1.2 billion yen will be spent on this project, until 1985, when the beginning of test-runs is expected.

Organization of the project is as follows:

Chairman: Prof. em. T. Kitagawa

Division I: 'Networks', with working groups:

- Network-related problems
- Network protocol
- Implementation
- Service

Division II: 'Data bases', with working groups:

- Register of chemical compounds
- Spectra data base
- Biological data base
- Toxicological data base
- Pharmaceutical data base
- Biochemical data base
- Environment data base
- Thermic properties data base

The following institutes will participate:

- Japan Information Center for Science and Technology (JICST)
- Japan Pharmaceutical Information Center (JAPIC)
- National Diet Library (NDL)
- Agricultural Information Center
- National Institute for Public Health
- National Chemical Laboratory for Industry
- National Institute for Environment Studies (NIES)
- Research Information Processing System (RIPS) of the Agency for Industrial Science and Technology (AIST)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

The aim of the project is to facilitate online access to distributed data bases, using one terminal and a single login-procedure. The system will be based technically on the digital network 'DXX' of NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corp.), and will be connected with the NTT Time Sharing Service DEMOS-E.

As far as the contents of the system are concerned, Japan apparently is making efforts to strengthen her data base production, and to build up her own register file for chemical compounds as the key data base of the System.

Chips race

The president of Control Data Corporation (CDC) has recently made a plea for establishing a consortium which would integrate private computer research. Such a consortium could be a counterbalance to the developments in other countries, e.g. Japan and France, where governments are strongly stimulating computer research in an attempt to conquer more of the market.

New Dutch information agency

COBIDOC, the Bibliographical and Documentary Committee in the Netherlands, will before the end of 1982 be officially transformed into the National Agency for Information Service (NAIN), under direction of Dr. A.A.Th.M. van Trier, former Dutch Minister for Science Policy. The new Agency will offer various kinds of support and advice to vendors and users of (automated) information services, and to the government in information-related matters. It will also carry out certain educational functions, and will potentially concern itself likewise with the question of telecommunications provisions, through contacts with the PTT.

This development results from rather long deliberations, and represents at least a modest further move toward a national information policy. One objective is to improve the standing of the Netherlands (vis-à-vis other countries) in terms both of information provision and of information use.

Day joins Indian Head; indicates NTIS not for sale

Melvin S. Day, long-time Director of the US National Technical Information Service, has retired and joined Indian Head as Vice President for information clearing houses of the Information Technology Group. In making his announcement, Day denied rumors that the Reagan administration was putting NTIS up for sale, but admitted stories that the administration was considering spinning NTIS off to the private sector.

CAS publication lag cut to ninety days

In a report on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of CAS, it is indicated that the median currency of abstracts measured from the publication date of the original article or patent to the publication date of the abstract in CA has improved by 22 days over the past twelve months.

Reports from IIASA

IIASA has published another three interesting reports:

- H.A. Maurer, I. Sebestyen and C. Charles. Printing without paper?, WP-82-16 (March 1982);
- H.A. Maurer, W.D. Rauch and I. Sebestyen. Some remarks on energy and resource consumption of new information technologies, WP-82-13 (Febr. 1982); and
- H.A. Maurer and I. Sebestyen, One-way versus two-way videotex, WP-82-30 (March 1982).

For copies, contact International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria. This journal has accepted the second of these reports for publication; it is scheduled for vol. 2, no. 2.

Knight-Ridder agrees to share market data

Knight-Ridder, the largest US newspaper chain, has agreed to share market data, from its viewdata test concluded in September, with Capital Communications. Capital is the second company to make such an agreement with Knight-Ridder (Affiliated Publications Inc., publisher of the Boston Globe, being the first), but is expected to become an equity partner with Knight-Ridder in future Viewtron ventures.

New journal on education and training, from North-Holland

March of 1983 will mark the first appearance of the quarterly publication, Education for Information: the International Review of Education & Training in Library and Information Science. This new journal will cover all aspects of the subject, from traditional areas of librarianship to the various applications of new technologies. It will concern itself not only with matters of formalized academic

programs, but also with the training roles of other organizations - libraries themselves, information units, governmental and semi-governmental agencies, database producers, professional associations, etc. Managing Editors will be R.F. Guy and J.A. Large, both Senior Lecturers at the College of Librarianship Wales, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3AS, United Kingdom (tel. (0970)3181; telex 35391 clw g). Subscriptions may be entered with the North-Holland Publishing Company at P.O. Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, Netherlands, or at 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA. Regular institutional subscription-price will be circa Dfl. 190 (approximately US\$67), including postage and handling.

Data bases

MATHFILE, from the prestigious Mathematical Reviews, has been mounted by BRS and, ISU has learned, is scheduled for DIALOG later in 1982. It will also be made available by at least one European host. The initial file dates from 1973, and will contain 400,000 items - with 3,000 scheduled for monthly updates.

RAMPI, the Raw Material Price Index, will be offered by ESA-IRS. This data bank contains historical and current data on price quotes for major world commodities and indexes produced by economic and finance groups. Information on exchange rates for major currencies is also included.

Encyclopedias. This area is presently a little confusing, so bear with us if we repeat some data published in earlier editions of ISU: Encyclopedia Britannica now on Mead's Lexis/Nexis system; Academic American on NYTIS in January 82; World Book on CompuServe and Kussmaul (Cadillac Modern Encyclopedia) on General Videotex C rp.

BIOSIS Previews is now up and in operation on JICST and JIP in Japan, while Data Star has announced the addition of abstract text for 1982.

Zoological Record from BIOSIS is said to be completing the record design phase. BIOSIS promises announcements in the near future.

CAS Online has added graphic structure input capabilities for searchers with Hewitt Packard 2647A terminals. A cassette that programs the terminal and a manual explaining the procedures are available from CAS.

Biography Master Index, from the publisher Gale Research, has been added by DIALOG. BMI is a tertiary index to more than 375 directories and dictionaries said to lead to four million biographical items.

Pergamon Infoline will be making available the following: Geomechanics Abstracts, Fine Chemicals Directory, Mass Spectrometry Database, and Chemical Engineering Abstracts.

Two new data bases available on ESA-IRS will be: HSELINE (health and safety) and PRICEDATA (financial).

BRS is mounting Environmental Impact Statements.

British Education Index will be on BLAISE-Line.

Finally, Euronet can now give access to INIS/AGRIS.

Data bases withdrawn

Pharmaceutical News Index	BRS
Science Citation Index	BRS
Social SCISEARCH	SDC
PATSEARCH	BRS
MEDLINE	BLAISE

New information school

A so-called 'Institut supérieur pour les sciences et techniques de l'information' is due to go into operation at Luxemburg in October of this year, under support of the Commission of the European Communities and of the local governmental authority. It is apparently destined to give little emphasis to the traditional and basic elements of library/information service, but will concentrate its instruction on computer-based information systems and on information management in the commercial and governmental sectors. The school, called SUPINFO, will offer a two-year program, as well as a one-year course of studies for persons of more advanced standing. Successful students may expect a diploma 'reconnu par les instances européennes'. English- and French-language curricula are offered, and German may be used for directed studies. Further information is available from the CEC, through its head of the multilingual action program, Loll Rolling. See Euronet-DIANE News no. 26, April 1982, p. 12.

Prestel reduces staff and service in face of losses

The Financial Times of London reports that Prestel has lost about eight million US dollars on revenues of about one million. In the face of this performance, the British viewdata operation is said to have reduced staff by 100, and regional computers by 70%.

Tools of the trade

The Online Chronicle of Online Inc. is an electronic journal offered at US\$35 per connect-hour on DIALOG. OC is offering gratis job advertising to both employers and job-seekers. Free classified advertisements for goods and services are also available. For information, contact the Editor, Jean-Paul Emard, 11 Tannery Lane, Weston, Connecticut 06883, USA.

GeoRef has published three new user aids. These are the GeoRef Thesaurus and Guide to Indexing, GeoRef Online Training Manual, and GeoRef Serials List. Order from the American Geological Institute, 5205 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia 22041, USA.

American Psychological Association offers the third edition of its Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms. This is the thesaurus used in indexing the Psyc-INFO data base. Information and order: PsycINFO, 1200 17th St. NW, Washington DC 20036, USA.

The National Library of Australia has announced a new publication, Australian Library and Information Research. ALIR will provide information on projects and research work completed and in progress in Australia. Inquiries should be sent to Chief Librarian, Research Registration, National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.

Economic Information Systems purchased by Control Data

EIS, producer of the X/Market data base, has been purchased by Control Data under undisclosed terms. The data base, used especially by marketing executives, is based on data from 450,000 US companies.

Seaside course on automation and STI

"The objective is to present the state of the art in automation of scientific and technical information." So states a promotional mailing for an "advanced course" to be organized at Cap d'Agde, Hérault, France, 13-24 September 1982, by INRIA (Institut national de recherche en informatique et en automatique). Sponsoring body is the Commission of the European Communities, and a number of well known specialists from various countries have been lined up as lecturers. English-French and French-English simultaneous translation will be provided. Information: INRIA, Relations extérieures "cours-séminaires", B.P. 105, 78153 Le Chesnay Cedex, France; tel. (3)954 90 20, ext. 515; telex 697 033 F.

Engineering Index has changed leader, as well as name

Hard on the heels of an announcement that Engineering Index would change its name to Engineering Information, we found out that John Creps, longtime executive director of the New York based data-base producer will retire. A search committee is said to have screened 200 applications. As matters have turned out, Herbert Landau - formerly of Auerbach Inc., the US Solar Energy Information Center, and briefly at Mead - is the chosen one.

BIOSIS changes microform policy, increases frequency of major publication

BioSciences Information Service has announced that its microform publications (film and fiche of Biological Abstracts) are no longer subject to lease or license restrictions. Ownership of these forms is transferred to the subscriber subject to normal 'fair use' restrictions. The Philadelphia organization has also announced that its publication Biological Abstracts/RRM will become a bi-weekly in 1982. This increased frequency is said to be in response to user needs for the report, review and meeting information contained in BA/RRM, and will be extended to tapes as well.

National library, international organizations move

The Royal Library of the Netherlands has now completed its move to a new building in The Hague, at Prins Willem Alexanderhof no. 5 (postal address: P.O. Box 90407, 2509 LK The Hague). The official opening, by Queen Beatrix, will take place on 28 September, and be followed immediately by a four-day international conference on "Libraries and the Humanities: Technological Aspects of Knowledge Handling".

The new library facility also houses, among other institutional offices, the headquarters of IFLA and FID (respective new postal addresses: P.O. Box 95312, 2509 CH The Hague; P.O. Box 90402, 2509 LK The Hague). IFLA's telephone number is now (070)14 08 84, that of FID is (070)14 06 71.

People

Nick Farmer of CAS has been named assistant director of R&D of the Columbus, Ohio abstracting service. Farmer had been research and development engineer. He received the B.S.E.E. in 1968 and an M.S.E.E., from the University of Maryland, in 1970. He joined the CAS staff in 1970.

The National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (note the recently adopted change in name) has announced the election of officers for 1982-1983. President Elect is Inez L. Sperr; Member Directors, Irving Zarembor (API) and Robert Marchisotto (BIOSIS); and Associate Member Directors, Robert R. Freeman (NOAA) and Joseph Caponio (NTIS).

Trends

Communicating word processors

If you have a word processor with communication facilities, it can communicate with its relatives and friends. However, the problem is that you cannot identify potential receivers. It is about time that we

produce a directory to communicating word processors as an analogy to the telephone directory. At the moment, we have equipment and messages, but nobody to call....

AT&T to restructure, enter new markets

As a result of a consent decree by the US courts, AT&T, US telecommunications giant, will divest itself of some operations, but enter new areas. Some possibilities include home information services, mobile communications, cable television, high-speed data networking and satellite communications. Watch this one!

Information politics

The previous issue of this journal contained an item concerning the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, and the pressure being exerted on this center for East-West cooperation by the government in Washington. Among the various factors involved in the controversy was the question of the flow of information, publicly available in the West through computerized retrieval systems and other means, to 'communist bloc' nations. United States financial support for IIASA, formerly channeled to the institute through the National Academy of Sciences, has now been definitively withdrawn. To at least a modest extent, it appears that this loss will be mitigated by contributions from private American sources. It is interesting to note that, for the present, the Soviet official support will be maintained.

Comments

Jargon

Just one sentence from ESA-IRS News & Views, vol. 7 no. 1, Febr. 1982: "HSELINE launch, PRICEDATA launch (called RAMPI in the last News & Views), and VIDEOTEX terminal access were the highly coloured beacons which unerringly guided scores of IOLIM attendees to the ESA-IRS stand."

This is the sort of jargon which will be the inner language for the future office-automation 'new elite' and which will widen the gap between the incrowd and the rest of mankind. No blame on ESA-IRS; we all are guilty.... There seems to be an average vocabulary of 3,000 (?) words for the average human being. Who of you accepts the challenge to write a paper on one of our topics, keeping within that vocabulary?

Failing technology

One of the dangers in our profession is the failure of systems which are mature in themselves, but fail since our organizational climate has not ripened enough to absorb them. One example is the early introduction of electronic mail systems which are bound to fail because of insufficient terminal penetration. Strategic Inc., USA, has now predicted that Xerox's Ethernet (one of the first local area networks) might be a failure in two years' time. Their argument is that potential users will be reluctant to purchase it because of the future availability of broadband systems.