News, Trends and Comments

News

"Now open for business"

The Information Age Institute used this phrase, in a press release
dated 21 May, to describe its current status, and stated that it "will
sponsor a variety of research projects and make the results of those
projects known to the public". Membership in the Institute was intended
to include companies, associations, unions and individuals with a com-
mon interest in information technology. The two founding members were
CBEMA (the Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers' Association)
and the National Electrical Manufacturers' Association. CBEMA, in Wa-
shington, DC, housed the Institute's office. Public education programs
were also on the agenda. President of the Institute was Carol Lee Hile-
wick (formerly executive director of the US council for World Communi-
cations Year). Whether the announced objectives seem laudatory to you,
or perhaps quite gratuitous in view of current activities under other
auspices, or even self-serving (for example, for CBEMA and its members)
- no matter. The Institute quietly closed up shop at the end of June.
R.I.P.

New competitive environment

Provision of domestic and international telecommunications services
in Japan is beginning to loosen up, for one thing with the entry of a
new joint venture company called Dai-ni Den-den Kikaku (the "second
telephone-telegraph corporation"), backed by, among others, Mitsubishi
and Sony. The new company has an initial capital of ¥1.6 billion, and
would start offering services in 1987 or 1988. Services are presently
supplied by KDD (overseas) and NTT (domestic), the latter now scheduled
to be partially spun off to the private sector next year. You can also
expect some commercial entrants to the Japanese value-added
communication network market - including foreign companies such as
AT&T.

Document conversion

The British Library, which has for some time been involved in the de-
velopment of an image digitizer capable of handling books without in-
flicting any damage to the bindings (as well as other kinds of docu-
ments, including manuscripts), now announces that this device is avail-

able for purchase - for £20,000 - from the manufacturer: Cambridge Robotics ltd., Cambridge Science Park, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 4BH, UK. Scanning resolution is 200 dots per inch. The library itself has already installed three of the digitizers - two at the Reference Division in London and one at the Lending Division in Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.

Keeping up

In both the business and governmental sectors in the United States, there is apparent a growing nervousness resulting from the suspicion that the American R&D establishment is in general too little aware of what is going on in Japan (whereas the Japanese very carefully monitor US developments, and put this knowledge very quickly to commercial use). Information on Japanese R&D activities is in fact available, in journal articles, reports and so on, but is not easily accessible to those companies which could potentially benefit from it. Selecting, acquiring, processing and evaluating the appropriate documents is no small task - to say nothing of the obvious language problem. In late spring, a subcommittee of the US House of Representatives held hearings on this subject. A certain amount of federal money has already been allocated for setting up, under contract, a pilot center to accumulate and process Japanese scientific and technical documents. (One product would be evaluated English-language reports.)

Now Engineering Information inc. is developing plans to implement, starting at the beginning of next year, a program called the "Japanese Awareness Service" - which will involve a monthly announcement bulletin, in machine-readable as well as hard-copy form, in addition to on-demand complete translations into English of Japanese-language articles. Approximately 1,000 journals are to be covered, as well as some reports and conference proceedings. The bulletin will list (enhanced) titles and assigned content descriptors (Subject Headings for Engineering, or "SHE" terms), but will not include abstracts. An annual subscription to the full service will cost US$45,000. $24,000 per year will get you a specialized service in the fields of electrical and electronic engineering, computer technology and automatic control. We are not aware just how much detailed market research lies behind EI's decision to launch its ambitious multi-client Japanese Awareness Service, but whether or not it proves to be a successful venture - and this should not be considered a foregone conclusion - the general idea lying behind it will almost surely continue to exercise a certain fascination for many in the west. Japan has, we shouldn't forget, now made an immense commitment (reported to be at the level of one fortieth of its gnp, or around US$25 billion per year, and still increasing) to supporting domestic R&D activities. Nor is it only the Americans who are planning to set up, or have already set up, mechanisms to collect and to disseminate information concerning these activities. Several European nations are already in on the act, and even the European Commission has warmed up to the notion of a major involvement in this sort of endeavor.

The Engineering Information service, which incidentally has no government funding, is clearly aimed at large companies (who can pay the steep price), and could be profitable even with well under fifty such customers. One might argue that it is the SMEs who are more hard up for this kind of information, however, and one aim of the European

programs (which do enjoy substantial government support) is apparently to provide it to them, in order to improve their competitive postures.

ASIDIC Fall Meeting

Twice a year, the Association of Information and Dissemination Centers (ASIDIC) gathers for one and a half days of intensive discussion on matters of especial current importance to the producers, distributors and users of electronic information products and services. The next meeting will take place in Georgetown on 17 and 18 September (with a reception, in accordance with long-standing ASIDIC tradition, on the preceding Sunday evening, the 16th), and the theme will be "Planning for the future: 1985 and beyond". Presentations are to include "Database planning for the future" by Peter Schipma of the IIT Research Institute, "The videodisk as a medium for database distribution" by Bette Steiger of Reference Technology inc., "The new patent information system" by L. Liddle of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and a paper by Scott Kostenbauder of IBM under the quaint title "Something old, something new; something white, something Big Blue", in addition to further presentations on Vu/Text, on BRS' "Colleague" medical information system, and on the EMIS system from INSPEC. As usual, work groups will be formed after conclusion of the presentations. These will conduct discussions and draw up brief reports - which in turn will be discussed in plenary session on the final day. ISU will be publishing a summary of the papers, reports and discussion from the 1984 ASIDIC Fall Meeting in a future issue. Anyone interested in attending the event should contact Ms. Jeanette Webb at the ASIDIC secretariat, P.O. Box 8105, Athens, GA 30603, USA; tel. (404) 542-3106.

It's official

At an extraordinary general assembly held at Philadelphia in the latter half of June, the International Council of Scientific Unions Abstracting Board (ICSU/AB) formally changed its name to the International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI) (see ISU vol. 3 no. 6, p. 345). At the same meeting, a new constitution was adopted. The group is eager to broaden its membership, and to foster communication among all participants in the scientific, technical and medical information transfer chain, in order to take advantage of the progress made independently by each information activity sector. Membership will now be open to information policy makers, publishers, vendors and data centers amongst others, directly or via umbrella organizations. Cooperation with ICSU will be maintained and new links will be established. ICSTI has retained the existing activities relating to various subject fields, document delivery, economics of information, etc., and has introduced a number of new activities dealing with legal aspects of information transfer, data handling, etc. A significantly increased budget allocation has been made for support of the technical program. Officers remain the following: Jacques Michel (president), Prof. A.J.C. Wilson (vice president), Dale Baker (general secretary) and Joseph Coyne (treasurer). Further details are available from Ms. M. Orfus, executive secretary, ICSTI, 51 Boulevard de Montmorency, 75016 Paris, France.

New edition of Williams' CRD forthcoming

The fourth edition of Computer-Readable Databases: A Directory and Data Sourcebook, compiled and edited by Martha E. Williams, is to be published late this year by the American Library Association and North-Holland. This most recent version of the standard reference work in the field, describing approximately 2,000 computer-readable files - both word-oriented and numeric - will for the first time be available in a two-volume set. One volume is entitled CRD: Science, Technology and Medicine, and the other CRD: Business, Law, Humanities and Social Sciences. The utility of this directory has been enhanced in the new edition by a change in format, in addition to the updating of existing entries, the accession of new word-oriented data bases, and the incorporation of numeric files. Each entry specifies the basic information (name of the data base, former name where applicable, update frequency etc.), particulars on the producer, and details regarding subject matter, scope, subject analysis and indexing, data elements, data-base services, and available user aids. There are indexes to subject, producer, online distributor, and names (allowing access by current names, previous names, nicknames, names of defunct data bases, and names of data bases which have been subsumed into other files). Martha E. Williams is professor of information science at the Coordinated Science Laboratory of the University of Illinois. She is editor of the Annual Review of Information Science and Technology and of Online Review, president of Information Market Indicators inc., chairman of the board of directors of Engineering Information inc., and former chairman of the National Library of Medicine board of regents.

Outside of the USA and Canada, CRD may be ordered from Elsevier Science Publishers (North-Holland), Attn. B. Wennekendonk, P.O. Box 1991, 1000 BZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands, at Dfl. 375 per volume, or Dfl. 675 for the two-volume set (Dfl. 600 prepaid until 31 December 1984). Orders from the USA and Canada should be sent to the American Library Association, Publishing Services, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611 (US$87.50 per volume; US$157.50 for the two-volume set).

Standards and software identification

What used to be called the American National Standards Committee Z39, now bears the name National Information Standards Organization. One of its more interesting recent projects (see ISU vol. 3 no. 5, p. 285) has been the attempt (through a subcommittee) to devise a system for standard computer software numbers. As we noted before, other projects were underway toward the same objective, and now we note that one of them - that of the United States ISBN (International Standard Book Number) Agency - has booked a noteworthy measure of success, at least with respect to microcomputer software. The agency's director reports that in excess of 39% of its monthly requests for new ISBNs have recently come from microcomputer software producers.

Data bases

Over recent months, the Information Retrieval Service of the European Space Agency (**ESA-IRS**) has either announced or implied the imminent

availability on its system of several new data bases. The actual status of some of them is not clear. They are as follows: ABI/Soft (file 89, the same as the Business/Professional Software Database - see our previous issue), Aerospace Daily (file 72, full-text, from Ziff-Davis, coverage from December 1983 onwards, updated daily, delayed (23-day) access penalty for non-subscribers to the printed version, now online), Chemical Engineering Abstracts (file 85, from the Royal Society of Chemistry, coverage from 1970 onwards, monthly updates, now online), Current Biotechnology Abstracts (file 95, from the Royal Society of Chemistry, coverage from 1983 onwards, monthly updates), Delft Hydroscience Abstracts (file 91, monthly updates), Electronic and Communications (Elecom) Abstracts (file 93, from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, coverage from August 1977 onwards, updated every other month), ENEL (file 60; on electricity and other energy sources, idustrial and domestic energy applications, electronic data processing etc.; from the Ente nazionale per l'energia elettrica; Italian-language; coverage from 1980 onwards; bi-monthly updates; now online), IBSEDEX (file 88, from the Building Services Research and Information Association), Laboratory Hazards Bulletin (file 90, from the Royal Society of Chemistry), Labordoc (file 53, from the central library and documentation branch of the International Labor Office, coverage from 1970 onwards, monthly updates, now online), Laborinfo (file 87; from the International Labor Office; dealing mainly with matters of law, regulations and policy; coverage from 1980 onwards; semiannual updates; supplemental to Labordoc), Mass Spectrometry Bulletin (Masslit) (file 86, from the Royal Society of Chemistry, coverage from 1966 onwards, monthly updates, now online), MOLARS (file 82, from the UK National Meteorological Library, coverage from 1971 onwards, monthly updates), Safety Science Abstracts (file 92, from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts). Further, the standard ESA-IRS download facility has now become available for the Chemabs file (after agreement from CAS), as well as for some other additional data bases.

In July, **DIALOG** made available Moody's Corporate Profiles (file 555, weekly updates), and Standard & Poor's Corporate Descriptions (file 133, bi-weekly rotating updates (each company record updated annually)). The vendor furthermore announces that Scisearch, now in three files, has been reorganized into four (file 34: 1984 onwards; file 87: 1981-83; file 94: 1978-80; file 186: 1974-77); and that EIS Industrial Plants (file 22) and EIS Non-manufacturing Establishments (file 92) will merge into a single data base to be called Trinet Establishment Database. Also in July, the Knowledge Index service became available in the United Kingdom, and the first portion of the dedicated Dialnet packet- switched telecommunication network was put into operation, incorporating eight nodes in the western USA. The phased implementation of the rest of the network will occur over the coming twelve months, involving forty-seven additional nodes.

Mead Data Central is now offering, on its Nexis service, a new data base called "Exchange", which contains the full texts of Securities and Exchange Commission 10-Q filings for many companies, as well as research reports, statistical reports, and consensus earnings projections for these companies. Scheduled supplementary information - to be added yet this year - includes SEC 10-K and 8-K filings; transcripts of company presentations by senior executives, from the New York Society of Security Analysts; and "country reports" on 150 countries.

Also new on Nexis, as of July, are Daily Report for Executives, and Washington Financial Reports - both from the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA). Both files are subject to a ten-day embargo starting on the date of publication of any given issue, and both cover the period January 1984 to date; earlier materials, back to January 1982, are to be added later this year. BNA has already reached agreement with Mead Data Central to offer further full-text files via Nexis and/or Lexis - including Antitrust and Trade Regulation Report; Securities Regulation and Law Report; Federal Contracts Report; International Trade Reporter; United States Law Week; Patent, Trademark & Copyright Journal; Daily Labor Report; Environment Reporter; and Chemical Regulation Reporter.

Finally, Nexis is now making available the Inter Press Service, and the magazine Fortune from Time inc.

I.P. Sharp has added the Eastern Bloc Countries Economic Data Base.

In volume 3 number 5 we announced that an online version of Current Abstracts of Chemistry and Index Chemicus, from the Institute for Scientific Information's Chemical Information Division, would be made available via the Questel service. This file (ISI-IC) has now been loaded, and is available for searching. It is not available elsewhere. Updates are monthly.

Now searchable on **ADP** is the Chemical Plant and Product Data Base, as well as Bancorp, Mergers & Acquisitions, and Grants (covering only the UK).

BRS has just loaded Associations' Publications in Print (file label: APIP), from R.R. Bowker. It covers almost 100,000 items currently (USA and Canada only), and will be updated quarterly. Publishers, Distributors, and Wholesalers, from the same producer, is scheduled to be up on BRS in September.

In June, Current Biotechnology Abstracts (file label: CBA, produced by the Royal Society of Chemistry, coverage from January 1983 onwards) was made available on **Pergamon InfoLine.**

DRI now offers access to Computer Specs, from GML Corporation.

European Community environmental law is the subject of a new multilingual data base which goes under the name Enlex, and is now accessible on the Euronet host **CED** in Italy.

The Belgian Euronet host **Belindis** has recently made available FALI, a bibliographic data base covering politics and political science, international relations, international economic affairs and related topics. It is a product of the Belgian ministry of foreign affairs central library, covers from 1981 onwards, and is updated monthly.

FIZ Technik has announced the availability of BLISS, a bibliographical data base produced by the Gesellschaft für betriebswirtschaftliche Information mbH in Munich, and dealing with the area of industrial management. Coverage is from 1975 onwards (with non-systematic coverage from earlier years), and updates are monthly.

The Philadelphia-based **Vu/Text** information retrieval service (of

Knight-Ridder) is now offering the Miami Herald in full text. Already available on this system were the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Wall Street Transcript, the Washington Post, the Sacramento Bee, and other local newspapers, as well as ABI/Inform and PTS PROMT. Forthcoming are newspapers of the Tribune Company group, and newswire services of Associated Press.

The British **Prestel** videotex service is now offering Bistel, which lists new market research and industry surveys, directories and trade journals acquired by the business information service of the Science Reference Library (British Library) in London. Prestel appears now to have a terminal-connection base of almost 50,000, and has recently claimed a regular audience of 250,000 persons.

SDC has announced that searchable abstracts are to be added to World Patents Index records on its ORBIT system in the course of this year. These abstracts will contain a summary of an invention's main claim, and its uses and advantages. Also on ORBIT, the INSPEC, Accountants, ERIC and NTIS files are now proximity-searchable. Records for 1964 through 1976 will be added to NTIS this year, apparently as a distinct file.

Data bases withdrawn

Chemlaw   DIALOG

Wilsonline gearing up

In volume 3 number 5, for October of 1983, we announced that the on-line retrieval service of the H.W. Wilson Company, designed to give computerized access to various of its subject indexes, was scheduled to be operational by "late fall of 1984". Wilson now recently has made known that the service will actually become available on 1 October. This service, apparently, was originally set to go under the name "Beacon", but subsequently was re-dubbed "Wilsonline". An extensive article on the automation of the Wilson indexes will appear in our next issue of ISU, vol. 4 no. 5 for October.

Accelerating delivery

The National Technical Information Service (US Department of Commerce) has undertaken an experiment for offering an electronic mail facility to its customers. One objective is to transmit selected abstracts at least two weeks before they are published in NTIS's newsletters. The service would presumably be limited, at least initially, to those parties already connected to an existing commercial electronic mail system.

Enhancing communication

SDC has announced that it plans soon to make available an electronic mail service to customers of its ORBIT Search Service. In order to send

a message to another ORBIT customer's user ID, you will have to be con-
nected on the system to a specific data base (of your choice), and
there will be no additional fee involved. A recipient will not be able
to retrieve a message while actually engaged in a search session, nor
to be notified that a message is waiting. The notification and retrie-
val procedure is activated at log-on to ORBIT. If a message is not de-
leted by the recipient, the notification will appear again at each sub-
sequent log-on. An electronic mail service has been available to BRS
users for some time, and DIALOG is scheduled to offer one soon.

On the move in the UK

After long and agonizing deliberations and discussions (including
talks with the Library Association about sharing quarters at Ridgmount
Street), ASLIB has decided to vacate its stately building on Belgrave
Square (SW1) in London, on 28 September, and to set up shop at Ormond
House, 26-27 Boswell Street, London WC1.

Meanwhile, IRS Dialtech - the ESA-IRS representative - has already
taken up a new address: at the Department of Trade and Industry, Room
392, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6RB (tel. (01)
212-5638/8225). It was formerly located on Ebury Bridge Road nearby.
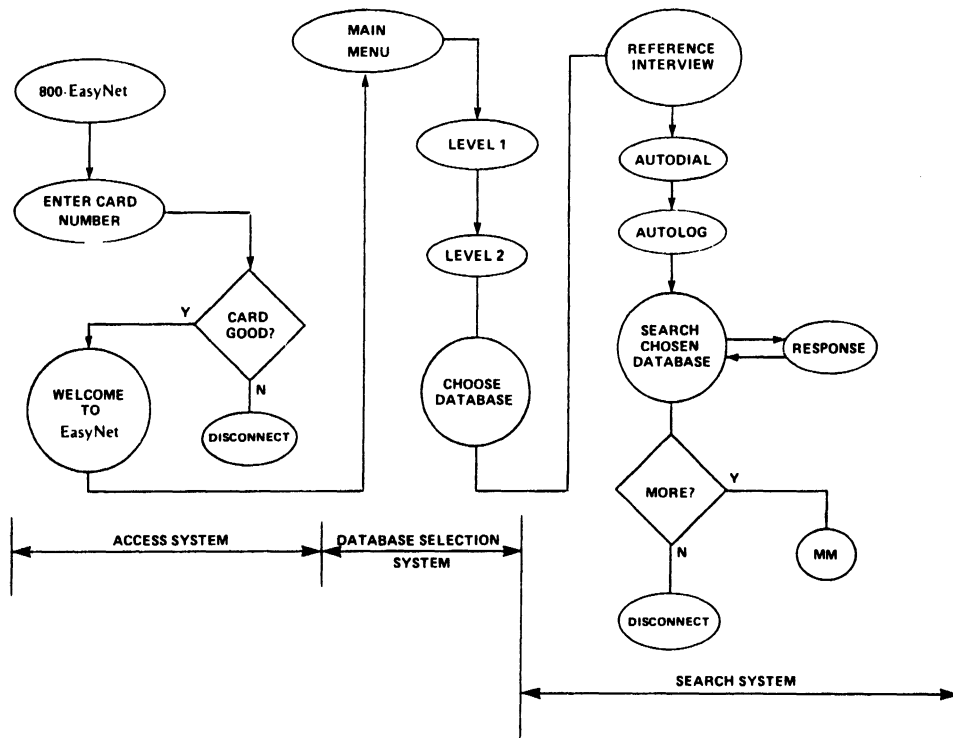
Making life easy for the searcher

The National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services
(NFAIS), on behalf of the data-base producers who are members of the
Federation, has this July launched a user-friendly information retrie-
val interface service called "Easynet". It is menu-driven, and gives
untrained users access to a wide range of commercially available data
bases. The new system offers to the public a fast, easy service requi-
ring no pre-registration or previous knowledge of online data-base
searching - one that first determines the needs of the user and then
connects the user to the appropriate data base. To gain access to Easy-
net, the user simply dials a toll-free telephone number
(1-800-EASYNET). After being greeted by the system, the user is asked
for his VISA or MasterCard credit card number. The system then verifies
the card and, if it is valid, permits the user to search. The first
search screen asks the user to press one of the numbers 1 through 4 to
find information about persons, places, subjects, or organizations.
Each choice leads the user to another screen which refines the search
further until the system can determine which database is most appropri-
ate for the user to search. Once the determination is made, Easynet
then helps the user to formulate his search question using the same
type of menu screens that were used earlier. At this point the system
dials out and connects to the vendor/data base which Easynet has cho-
sen. The user is unaware that any switching is taking place, and sees
only a continuous communication between him and the system. Once the
data base is searched, the user is told how many articles were found
(the most recent references are automatically retrieved, up to fifteen
in number), and he can choose: 1) to see their titles or abstracts; 2)
to print them; 3) to have the complete article(s) mailed to his loca-
tion (overnight or by regular mail); 4) to end his search, or to begin
a new one.

A broad range of information will be available to the public via Ea-

synet, including news, entertainment, business, science, medicine, so-
cial science, arts and humanities, and public services on both numeric
and bibliographic data bases. Users will also have access to an online
encyclopedia which can be searched in lieu of a data base.
Easynet has several major advantages over other services. First, it is
extremely simple to access because public telephone lines are used ra-
ther than the private networks, and credit cards are used rather than
passwords. No registration is required; no keeping track of network te-
lephone numbers, which vary with geographical location, is necessary;
and no remembering of passwords is called for. Second, familiarity with
online data bases is unnecessary because the system selects from the
many hundreds of data bases available the one or two most appropriate
for the user. Third, the user need not have familiarity with search
languages because Easynet automatically translates the search question
into the languages required by the various vendors whose data bases are
searched, and Easynet's simple series of menu screens requires no
search language of its own. For the more experienced user, Easynet of-
fers an alternative means of accessing all NFAIS data-base producers
without going through the complete series of menu screens. If the user
knows which data base is wanted, then by naming the vendor and data
base the user can jump directly to the search screens and be connected
more quickly.

The basic cost of connecting to Easynet will be US$5.00. Accessing
one data base and retrieving up to fifteen titles or references will
cost an additional $5.00. Recycling through the Easynet system will
cost $3.00 for each subsequent search. The cost of retrieving abstracts
will be $1.50 for each, of delivery of full documents $8.50 for each by
regular mail. The document delivery service is provided by Information
on Demand of Berkeley, California. A flowchart for Easynet appears be-
low.

Tools of the trade

The fourth edition (in nine volumes) of the International Patent Classification is now available from Carl Heymanns Verlag KG, Gereonstrasse 18-32, 5000 Köln 1, FRG; tel. (0221) 134022; telex 8881888. This version becomes effective at the beginning of next year. The third edition appeared in 1979.

The 1984 Eurodata Foundation Yearbook may be ordered for £95/US$180 inclusive postage and handling, from Eurodata Foundation, Broad Street House, 55 Old Broad Street, London EC2M 1RX, UK; tel. (01) 638-3021; telex 887523 btelc g. The work contains information on data communications services in eighteen European nations. Tariffs for North American and Japanese data communications services to Europe are also listed, as are pertinent international organizations, and CCITT Recommendations. Five editions have been previously published. A tariff update ("Revision of Tariffs") is to appear in October, and for the combined price of £115/US$225 you will receive the Yearbook now, plus the update when published.

University Microfilms International (300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA, tel. (313) 761-4700; 30-32 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7RA, UK, tel. (01) 631-5030, telex 8811363 exel g) has produced a ten-year cumulation (1973-1982) to the Comprehensive Dissertation Index. The work is in thirty-eight volumes: fifteen for the sciences, seventeen for the social sciences and humanities, and a six-volume author index. Only North American dissertations are cited. It is also available in microfiche. Details of pricing and discounts are available from the publisher.

The sixth edition of the Thesaurus of Metallurgical Terms is available for US$55/£30 from Metals Information, American Society for Metals, Metals Park, OH 44073, USA, tel. (216) 338-5151; or, attn. James van Oosterom, Metals Information, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5DB, tel. (01) 839-4071.

Datakontext Verlag (Göttingerstrasse 23, Postfach 400553, 5000 Köln 40, FRG; tel. (0221) 78913) has published an almost 2,000-page multilingual (English/French/German) dictionary of data processing, encompassing approximately 35,000 terms. An earlier version had appeared in 1972. This new publication, in two volumes, costs DM180 (FF 460; US$84) exclusive of postage and handling.

Langen-Müller Verlag / F.A. Herbig (Hubertusstrasse 4, 8000 München 19, FRG; tel. (089) 177041; telex 5215045) has published a Bildschirm-text Lexikon, edited by H.G. Roth and L. Sucharewicz. It contains approximately 700 entries, as well as the text of the "State Agreement on Videotex" and further information.

The United Nations has plans to prepare a new, third edition of the Macrothesaurus, and in addition perhaps a common United Nations Thesaurus. The former would exist in English, French and Spanish versions. The latter would be a joint project of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs' Information Systems Unit, and the Dag Ham-

marskjold Library in New York – in the framework of the work program of the UN Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems.

Library automation

Agreements on automation projects for two major research libraries have recently been announced, and in each case the nod has gone to a foreign contractor. Geac Computer Corporation ltd. of Canada will automate the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, in conjunction with Sema, a French software company. Remote access from other French libraries will be possible, and the project is reported to be worth the equivalent of approximately US$1.5 million. Meanwhile, the research libraries of the New York Public Library have installed the Perline and Bookline systems from Blackwell.

Library automation: RLIN links

The Research Libraries Group inc. (RLG) has signed memoranda of understanding with three library system vendors to plan the development of a computer-to-computer link between their systems and the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). The three participating vendors in this new cooperative effort are: 1) the libraries of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, creators of the NOTIS library automation system; 2) Biblio-Techniques, Olympia, Washington, vendors of the BLIS library automation system (based on features of the Washington Library Network system); and 3) Geac Computer Corporation ltd., library systems division, Markham, Ontario, Canada, vendors of integrated local library systems. RLIN is RLG's automated information network; the system supports bibliographic and authorities searching, cataloguing, acquisitions, interlibrary loan, collection development data, and bibliographic data for special subject areas.

RLG has agreed with each of these vendors to perform pre-project planning for the implementation of a "standard network interconnection" that uses computer-to-computer communications protocols developed by staff at RLG, the Washington Library Network, and the Library of Congress as part of their cooperative "linked systems project" (LSP). These protocols are based on the International Standards Organization's Open System Interconnection reference model. They will allow library and information retrieval applications on one system and computer to communicate with those on others.

For more information, contact John R. Schroeder, Director of Research and Development, RLG, Jordan Quadrangle, Stanford, CA 94305, USA; tel. (415) 328-0920.

Working conditions

In the USA, a Coalition for Workplace Technology has been formed, on the initiative of Vico Henriques, president of the Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers' Association (CBEMA). The idea is to disseminate information and opinion with respect to new technologies in office environments, but also to exercise political pressure against the enactment of legislation which would tend to restrict implementa-

tion of automated procedures - particularly with respect to visual display units. There are some twenty members of the coalition, aside from CBEMA. Some of these are also concerned in the first instance with selling office equipment (or components thereof), but others are not: for instance the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, the Association of Legal Administrators, the American Bankers' Association, the American Council of Life Insurance, the American Society for Personnel Administration, the American Society of Travel A- gents, and the US Chamber of Commerce.

This development must be viewed against the background of increased governmental (i.e., mostly Congressional) interest in the question of "programmable automation" as it affects - and will affect - employment and working conditions.

Meanwhile, the European Computer Manufactuers' Association (ECMA) has compiled and released a list of recommendations for workplaces using visual display equipment, as part of a report entitled "Ergonomics re- commendatiuns for VDU workplaces". CBEMA's recommendations had been made public already last autumn. Some of the ECMA recommendations are:

- a basic sitting posture that includes feet flat on the floor or footrest, vertical trunk and lower leg, forearms at 70-90 degrees from upper arm, wrists flexed no more than 20% and head inclined downward but no more than 20 degrees

- distance between users of not less than 39 inches, center to cen- ter

- height-adjustable chairs

- screens that are free from disturbing reflections or glare

- a combination of ambient and task lighting to achieve a 300-500 lux intensity

- in most cases, detachable keyboards and screens whose inclination is adjustable

- keyboard slopes between 5 and 18 degrees

- some form of feedback to the user when keys are adequately depressed

- displays free from perceptible flicker

- a 5 x 7 dot matrix for character presentation

In the meantime, the Germans, we note, have taken a characteristic approach to the matter. For the last four years, the Institute for the German Economy and the Institute for Applied Labor Science have been working on something called the "Project for a Documentation and Infor- mation System on the Subject of the Humanization of Working Conditions". During the first phase, heavily supported by the Federal Research Ministry of the FRG, a special team has created a file of ap- proximately 30,000 documents. Just how this "data bank" is going to be made available is not yet clear.

Eliminate the guesswork

For US$25, you can order the newly published Objective Performance Measures for Academic and Research Libraries from the Association of Research Libraries, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA; tel. (202) 232-2466.

Answering the call of duty

While we're on the subject of performance, consider this. The Library of Congress has recently announced that, during the six-month period 1 October 1983 - 31 March 1984, its Congressional Research Service (CRS) responded to 199,500 research requests, or on the average somewhat more than 1,500 per working day. Furthermore, the CRS' selective dissemination of information service counted 588 Congressional subscribers in March of this year.

People

Derwent Publications ltd. has just acquired a "managing director designate" in the person of Paul Hunt, who had for the last five years served as executive vice president at Nelson Canada, and was previously with Prentice Hall. Montagu (Monty) Hyams is apparently about to abdicate as Derwent's managing director, but will stay on as chairman and chief executive. Mr. Hunt has considerable experience in marketing - something which may come in handy now that his new company has entered into so-called "sponsored" arrangements with several hosts for online distribution of its patents files.

Previously (vol. 4 no. 1/2, p. 92), we reported that Martin Hensel and Robert Nelson, both previously with LaserData, had formed a consulting partnership in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Now it has just been announced that they have become, respectively, vice president and president of Wilson-Cambridge inc. - a new subsidiary of the **H.W. Wilson** Company. Wilson-Cambridge's mandate is to perform data-base development work, particularly with respect to optical disk technology.

The **Information Technology Group** (which includes BRS, Predicasts, Information Handling Services, and other companies) has appointed Carl P. Fisher (formerly of Mead Data Central) as vice president for strategy, and E. Broox Randall (formerly of Informatics General Corporation) as vice president for business operations.

Walter Rapawy has become chief executive officer at **InnerLine** (Rolling Meadows, Illinois), the provider of online banking and financial services. He comes from the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

The **Information Industry Association** has taken on two new staff members. David Y. Peyton is now director of government relations, and Elizabeth Nanni is director of marketing and communications.

After less than a year as president and chief executive officer at **Source** Telecomputing Corporation, Bert Helfinstein has left (for Entre Computer Centers), and his replacement is Jay A. Keller, from Control Data Corporation.

As of 1 September 1984, the executive director of the Association of College and Research Libraries (**ACRL**) - a division of the American Library Association - will be JoAn S. Segal, who is now executive director of the Bibliographic Center for Research, the inaptly named regional library cooperative headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

Trends

Europe: local-area

A recent Frost & Sullivan report projects that the local area network
(LAN) market in Europe will expand to the annual equivalent of US$120
million (1983 dollars) in revenues by 1990, as unit shipments increase
by a factor of ten - to 30,000. LAN components are to fall in price at
a compound rate of 30% or more per annum. The peak will occur, accor-
ding to the report, in 1988-89. The UK and the FRG will account, toge-
ther, for almost exactly half of the market; of the remainder, France
will make up almost 45%, and Italy half of that amount.

Europe: wide-area

A major boost has been given to the electronic information market by
a series of agreements on APOLLO, a new European satellite communica-
tions system, at a meeting of the APOLLO Working Group on 4 July 1984,
in Luxemburg.

APOLLO will be a high-speed digital transmission system for long data
messages, in particular full-text documents and graphics. This will
provide a long-awaited infrastructure for a market which is potentially
several orders of magnitude larger than the current bibliographic and
numeric data-base market. Services based on APOLLO will commence from
1986 onwards.

The APOLLO Working Group brings together representatives from: 1) Eu-
telsat, the European Organization for Telecommunication Satellites,
which will operate the satellite used by APOLLO; 2) national post and
telecommunications administrations (British Telecom, for example, has
already indicated that it will provide transmission facilities for A-
POLLO); 3) the permanent nucleus of the GTD/CSTD group of CEPT (Euro-
pean Conference of PTT Administrations); 4) the European Space Agency
(ESA), which will organize the technical development of APOLLO; and 5)
the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), at whose request A-
POLLO is being created. The CEC will organize the first trials of APOL-
LO - together with document delivery services in Europe, such as the
British Library Lending Division in the UK.

The CEC is already co-financing with industry a 16 million ECU (Euro-
pean currency unit) package of experiments in electronic document deli-
very. APOLLO will overcome serious obstacles to their later commercial
development, notably: 1) unsuitability of relatively narrow-band ter-
restrial data networks, such as Euronet, and 2) unavailability for se-
veral years of high-capacity digital networks (ISDNs) at international
level.

APOLLO will cover the entire area of western Europe which is served
by the 'parent' satellite, ECS-2 (European communication satellite,
flight unit 2), which will be launched by ESA later this year.

The APOLLO system will form the kernel of electronic information ser-
vices where there are typically few suppliers and many, widely distri-
buted users. A prime application is as a return channel for documents
which have been located after an online bibliographic search on Euronet
DIANE services. Other applications would include:

- remote printing of newspapers etc.
- 'broadcasting' of press agency and other news
- multidestination distribution of technical specifications, spare part lists (e.g. for cars)
- electronic mail
- high-resolution (color) image transmission
- computer data file transfer

An important innovation at the user's end will be the provision of receive-only earth stations, which are cheaper than transmit/receive earth stations by a factor of more than ten. Between twenty and thirty receive-only earth stations will be installed during the initial trial period, from 1986 onwards.

The system requirements specifications for APOLLO will be published in September. Some of the most important proposed service characteristics of the APOLLO system are:

- a high rate of information transfer on the satellite channel of 1920 Kbits per second, compared with 48 Kbits/s maximum on X25 land networks, e.g. Euronet
- high error protection: the bit error rate will not exceed one bit in 100 million bits for 99% of the time
- the basic traffic unit of 480 Kbits is almost 4,000 times larger than its equivalent on land data networks
- under normal operating conditions, up to ten earth stations can be active simultaneously; the response time between request and transmission will not exceed five seconds when only one earth station is active, and fifty seconds when all ten are active
- overnight transmission at reduced cost is a possible option

At least nine ESA member states will participate in the APOLLO program.

Comments

The 'softer' sciences

On a few occasions in the past we have referred to, or cited from, items appearing in the journal Nachrichten für Dokumentation, and here we would like to do so again. In the June 1984 issue (pages 165-166) Karl A. Stroetmann, with particular reference to an article appearing earlier in the same journal, complains that discussions of information policy or of the data-base industry often seem to be heavily weighted toward the side of information requirements of the hard sciences and technology. "A reduction of specialist information [Fachinformation] to information in the area of the natural sciences and technology", he writes, "is short-sighted, and hazardous in terms of social policy. What we need is a comprehensive scheme for information policy, one which embraces the total system of science, technology, economics and society - including human affairs." He states also that "The interdisciplinary complexity of societal questions should also be taken into account in preparing and making accessible sources of specialist information." (Our translations).

Dr. Stroetmann is addressing himself particularly to the official information policy situation prevailing in the Federal Republic of Germany, but at the same time he does make a point which is valid, we believe, for other countries and indeed internationally. Why haven't the social sciences and the humanities figured more prominently in discussions and decisions regarding national, or international (for example in Europe), information policy? Why has the information industry given relatively little attention to the social sciences, and hardly any at all to the humanities? Why do humanistic researchers and educators have very few (and virtually no highly specialized) online data bases or other computerized information products and services at their disposal? Is there no money in these fields for the potential entrepreneurs, and should services therefore be regularly subsidized? Is there in fact an existing market, or if not could a market be developed? Are budgets sufficient? It appears that, taken together, existing social science and humanities online files amount to about 3% of the actual current market in terms of revenues, at least in the USA, and humanities files account for less than 10% of even this meagre total. Nor is the situation improving. We note also incidentally that one of the leading humanities data bases, the Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography, was last year withdrawn from BRS - a vendor which is known as especially successful in the academic sector; it now remains only on DIALOG, which for whatever reason has provided and so far still provides a home to a number of unprofitable humanities files. Clearly there is much research work going on, at many levels, in the humanistic disciplines; the hard-copy information retrieval resources are well developed and quite sophisticated; workers in these disciplines tend to be diligent and accomplished information seekers. But, essentially, electronic information provision techniques have had no impact here. It is perhaps time that more attention is devoted to a consideration of this problem.

Timing

Now that interest in the downloading phenomenon has waxed and waned, that it has been discussed almost ad nauseam, that more than one major survey report has been devoted to it, and technological/commercial developments have reduced it to a secondary issue for many information professionals, the British Library has decided to fund a year-long study of it - by, of all bodies, the Primary Communications Research Centre at the University of Leicester. It seems doubtful that sufficient new light will be thrown on the matter to justify the effort involved.