News, Trends and Comments

News

Business Week makes information 'official'

The prestigious American business publication from McGraw-Hill has established an "Information Processing Department" as a regular feature. In-depth reporting of high-technology areas, computing, teletex and videotex is promised.

Document delivery: ADONIS

After extensive market research in various countries, and independent systems analyses, it appears that the ADONIS project for establishing an international, optical disk based storage and delivery system for the full texts of scientific, technical and medical articles from numerous publishers will definitely go ahead, and reach operational status sometime in 1984. The system will involve laser scanning and printing techniques, and allow acceptable reproduction of illustrative matter, as well as text. "ADONIS" has been registered as a trademark. We hope shortly to be able to provide further details concerning implementation of the project.

NLM reduces regional medical library network

In a move described as a "reconfiguration", the US National Library of Medicine will reduce its present eleven regions to seven. A technical plan for the reconfiguration will form the basis for a request for proposals to be announced with contractors in August or September of 1982. The changeover is set for October of 1982.

Library automation in France

Dismayed by the relatively primitive level of "informatisation" in French university libraries, the Direction des Bibliothèques, des Musées et de l'Information Scientifique et Technique has undertaken a plan to enhance computerization on an integrated basis. The software MEDICIS has been selected, to run initially on the MITRA series from SEMS, along with the SIBIL software (developed at the Cantonal and University Library of Lausanne), to run on the IBM 4341. An intermediate, introductory phase employing micro-computers is

foreseen. Further details: Bulletin des bibliothèques de France, vol. 27, no. 6, June 1982, pp. 351-353.

CAS observes 75th anniversary

Issue number 12 of CAS Report gives an interesting and intimate summary of the events, people, and factors involved in the chemical service's first seventy-five years.

UKLDS

A joint undertaking of the British Library and various library coope-ratives, along with representatives from certain national associations (e.g. ASLIB and the Library Association), the Cooperative Automation Group has now come forward with proposals for a United Kingdom Library Database System. This super bibliographic file (which "by its nature... will not be capable of sustaining coherent subject sear-ching") will be mounted by the Bibliographic Services Division of the BL, with some consequences - as yet not entirely clear - for the fledg-ling BLAISE-LINE services. Holdings data are to be included with the records, making interlibrary loan applications possible. Just when the UKLDS is intended to become operational is not presently known to us, nor is the reason that a pronounceable acronym was not selected (is it still too late?). See the Library Association Record, vol. 84, no. 9, September 1982, pp. 293-294 - where, among other places, further details of the proposed system may be found.

Hardware enhancement at Source

A noteworthy increase in capacity will be the result of the transi-tion to a new computer center by Source Telecomputing, due to take place shortly.

US photocopying study published

A report entitled "Libraries, Publishers and Photocopying" has been published by King Research, Inc. Data from six studies conducted for the US Copyright Office are presented. Orders were accepted on a 'first-come, first-served' basis beginning in June 1982. Prepayment is required to King Research, Inc., P.O.Box 71, Rockville, MD 20850, USA.

Social science information center in Germany

The establishment in the Federal Republic of Germany of a Fachinfor-mationszentrum Sozialwissenschaften und Arbeit remains still in some doubt, due to present reluctance on the part of the federal states to undertake, in cooperation with the central government, the

maintenance of such an enterprise. It is seen as a complement to the already effective information infrastructure in the natural-scientific /technical realm. Nonetheless, the states are in principle committed to the center. "In a period, in which the social, political and economic consequences of science and technology are becoming always greater and more noticeable, and at the same time more difficult to grasp in their entirety, even politicians, associations and scholars find themselves, in practice, all the more in need of easily accessible, reliable information." See Nachrichten für Dokumentation, vol. 33, no. 4/5, September 1982, pp. 193-194.

Lewis takes aim for the future

Up to two years will be necessary for implementation of proposals put forward by Dennis Lewis for an extensive series of changes designed to bring ASLIB "on to the launch-pad" toward becoming "a revitalised, successful, nationally and internationally acclaimed influential force in the vital and expanding field of total information management." No small ambition, this; but indeed the adjustments planned for the association are numerous: a) redefinition of the corporate objective; b) a new management structure, entailing three Operational Groups (Information & Consultancy, Professional Development, and Publications), plus a "Central Services facility" and a Marketing Manager; c) an improved committee structure; d) a new subscription structure; e) improved staff career-development systems; f) a new name - The Association for Information Management (AIM); g) new quarters; h) better working relationships among the association, its branches and its special interest groups. It is now almost a full year since Lewis took over as Director of ASLIB (the UK "Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux"), and the report in which his proposals were contained was accepted by ASLIB Council on 30 June. Lewis had concluded that there existed a "mismatch" between his organization's philosophy and "the fast-changing external environment", and that ASLIB is presently "ill-prepared for the next decade". It should be interesting to see just what shape this important information association will in fact have at the end of that decade. For further information on the report "ASLIB - The Future Beckons", contact Dr. Dennis Lewis, Director, ASLIB, 3 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PL, United Kingdom.

One more

In our last issue, we commented on the connection of the Swedish Telepak to Euronet. It now appears that that country's neighbor will join in as well, as the European Commission and Finland have already carried negotiations to an advanced stage.

Codes of practice

One of the subjects singled out for especial attention at the Technical Meeting of the European Association of Information Services

(EUSIDIC), held in Paris at the end of April (see ISU, vol. 1, no. 5, p. 309), was codes of practice for on-line data-base producers, vendors and users. Now a report of that portion of the discussions has been printed in the August issue of Newsidic, the association's newsletter. One point stressed, but not fully resolved, was that producers have certain rights to data from vendors concerning the use of their products. Furthermore, twelve generally agreed principles are laid out.

BRS goes 'public'

The American on-line vendor Bibliographic Retrieval Services, heretofore a subscription, club-like organization, has gone to open usage. Basic connect-hour rate (without data-base fees and telecommunications charges) is US$35. In addition, there is a US$50 fee to obtain a password.

Biotechnology

Derwent Publications has announced its Biotechnology Abstracts, scheduled to appear twice per month. On-line access to the data base is planned.

"Humanities" texts

An inventory of machine-readable texts in the humanities will be initiated, under Council on Library Resources funding, by the Rutgers University Libraries, according to College & Research Libraries News, vol. 43, no. 7, July/August 1982, p. 239.

New special interest group for chemical information

The Gesellschaft deutscher Chemiker has set up a Fachgruppe Chemie-Information, which has already held its inaugural conference. For a brief report, see Nachrichten für Dokumentation, vol. 33, no. 3, June 1982, p. 123.

French critique

For an interesting commentary on the present status and the prospects of the state-subsidized on-line service Télésystèmes-QUESTEL, we refer readers to Infotecture no. 50, for 6 September 1982, where the author states: "Des solutions pour améliorer la compétitivité de Questel, et pour garantir un développement solide du serveur national existent. Encore faut-il avoir la volonté de les mettre en oeuvre." and quotes from a recent INSERM report: "Pascal est accessible avec un logiciel français sur Télésystèmes, mais l'interrogation est beaucoup plus rapide, plus performante et surtout moins chère sur l'ordinateur d'ESA, avec un logiciel de type Dialog".

Data bases

Harfax Industry Data Sources may now be consulted on Data Star as well as BRS and DIALOG, and is scheduled to be put up on NEXIS.

New on DIALOG: Mental Health Abstracts (file 86, now updated by Plenum); Standard & Poor's News Daily (file 133, consisting of updates to file 132); BLS Labor Force, and BLS Employment, Hours and Earnings (files 177 and 178, both from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and formerly part of the Labor Statistics file); TELEGEN (on biotechnology, from the Environment Information Center, file 238); LABORLAW (file 244, from the Bureau of National Affairs); WATERNET (file 245); CHEMZERO and CHEMSIS 82+ (chemical substances, files 300 and 331). Note that file 80, Labor Statistics, no longer exists as such, having been supplanted by the new separate files 177 and 178, along with file 175 (BLS Consumer Price Index) and file 176 (BLS Producer Price Index). See also ISU, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 55.

The Eighteenth Century Short-title Catalogue is now available on-line via BLAISE-LINE, and via the Research Library Group's RLIN. The Catalogue is not yet complete, representing for the moment only British Library holdings. Records from other sources will be added over the coming years.

Mead Data Central has added the weekly National Journal as a full-text addition to its NEXIS service.

The statistical data base COMEXT has been made available on both CISI and EURIS. Created by the Statistical Office of the European Community at Luxemburg, it contains time series (more than three million) pertaining to the Community's external trade, and the external trade of its member states. Some 7,000 products are distinguished.

Now accessible on ESA-IRS: TELEGEN (file 49); Engineering Meetings (file 51). Planned for the near future: IRRD (file 43).

Among new files on DRI: AGTEXT (USA); DMS Market Intelligence (aero-space and defense); Japan Price.

New on DIMDI: ABDA/ARZNEISTOFFE (pharmaceutical data).

Also now on Data Star: Engineering Meetings.

The Toxic Substance Control Act file from the Environmental Protection Agency is to be available later in the year on SDC.

Business International Forecast is now available via I.P. Sharp.

DIALOG has announced the public availability of Career Placement Registry/Experienced Personnel (CPR/EP). CPR/EP is a companion to Career Placement Registry/Student already available. The files allow an employment candidate to place a mini-résumé in the file for a fee. The information is searchable by prospective employers, and the résumés may be ordered off-line in a full-data format. CPR/EP is produced by Career Placement Registry, Inc., a subsidiary of Plenum Publishing Corp. On-line charges are US$50 per connect hour. Entry into the registry costs $15-$40 depending on salary level desired.

A new patents file on Télésystèmes-QUESTEL is INPI-3.

Using two Amdahl V-8 computers, the Bank Administration Institute (BAI) is offering several financially oriented data bases in the United States. Offerings include a bond market forecasting file, material from The American Banker magazine and Citibank, as well as Disclosure. "Innerline" is a subscription service with a US$36 connect-hour fee for prime-time use.

ABI/Inform is to be made available in the near future on the Dialcom system.

The US National Agricultural Library has announced the availability of AGRIS tapes through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). At present distribution is limited to the United States; however, it is said that interested parties outside the US may apply to the appropriate national center in their region for permission to obtain and use these tapes abroad.

NERAC (New England Research Application Center), located at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CN, announces the addition of World Surface Coatings Abstracts and Engineering Meetings. No rates quoted since NERAC operates on specific contract basis with its customers.

Data bases withdrawn

DAFSA   Spidel
KOMPASS   Spidel
RAPRA   DIALOG, ESA-IRS
TITUS   SDC
USRFP   SDC

Users' group proceedings

Now available for DM48 from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation, Westendstrasse 19, 6000 Frankfurt a.M. 1, Fed. Rep. Germany, are the proceedings of the DGD On-line Users' Group meeting which took place in May of this year.

Technology for preservation

On June 17th, the Library of Congress sponsored a day-long conference on the subject of the deterioration and conservation of library materials - a matter of greatly increasing concern to archivists and librarians. One line of discussion pursued at the conference was the feasibility of bringing optical disk mass-storage technology to bear on the pressing problems of literature growth and document preservation. The LC already has underway a project aimed at the eventual large-scale application of this technology, and is also planning to employ optical disks for storage and retrieval of catalogue records, many of which are in non-roman scripts.

European conference, British style

The Library Association (UK) has announced the "First International Eurinfo '82 Conference and Exhibition", to be held 8 through 10 December of this year in Brighton, United Kingdom. Organized by the LA groups Government Libraries, and International and Comparative Librarianship, the meeting will deal with "Information Networks in Europe". According to the preliminary announcement, "the gap between those requiring information and those producing it has, over the years, become wider. ... the first-ever Eurinfo Conference will examine the ways in which European governments (both individually and as part of the Community) generate information and the extent to which it meets the needs of users. It will also consider the ways in which libraries and information centres help in the dissemination of this information, the developing use of information networks and the interaction between them." Speakers and session chairmen, apparently, will be for the most part from the United Kingdom itself, with minority representation from the Continent. The language of the conference will be English. LA members receive a discount on conference fees. Contact R.E. Palmer, Conferences Officer, The Library Association, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE, United Kingdom; tel.: (01)636 7543; telex: 21897 laldn g.

DISC development

BRS appears ready to offer for on-line use a new current-awareness file of its own making, to be known as Data-processing and Information Science Contents (DISC). The latter portion of the title might be considered something of a misnomer, since the product seems so far to be aimed primarily at an audience of EDP enthusiasts and IR practitioners.

CAE

Information on computer-aided engineering is the purpose of a newly available service operated by the Library and Information Service of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (UK), and funded by the British Department of Industry. For further information, contact: Jeremy Acland or Karen Murphy, CAE Data Service, IEE, Savoy Place, London WC2R OBL; tel.: (01) 240 1871, ext. 267.

TDF

Les flux transfrontières de données: vers une économie internationale de l'information? has been published by Documentation française. This is an abridged version of an earlier report by Alain Madec, prepared for an interministerial commission of the French government, and is available for FF58 from the publisher at 124 rue Henri Barbusses, 93308 Aubervilliers Cedex, France.

Intelsat

The International Telecommunications Satellite Organization has broken ground for a new headquarters building in Washington, DC. The ceremony took place on July 20th, and the facility is to be completed in October 1984. The organization also has a new Chairman of the Board: Pierre Godiniaux of the French Direction Générale des Télécommunications.

Tools of the trade

Engineering Index has announced publication of their annual (1981) publication covering the materials indexed in Engineering Index. Subscribers will receive four 1982 supplements as they are issued. "PIE" is priced at US$30.

The Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors has been issued in its ninth edition.

The 1982 edition of the PTS User's Manual is available from Predicasts for US$15.

Administrative information systems

As successor to the Centre d'Etudes et d'Expérimentation des Systèmes d'Information and the Centre Technique Informatique, the Centre d'Etudes des Systèmes d'Information des Administrations (CESIA) has been established at Marseille.

Contents

A new current-awareness service in the area of librarianship and documentation will be launched mid-October by the Library of the Nederlands Bibliotheek en Lektuur Centrum in Den Haag. It is a publication, appearing every two weeks, containing reproduced tables of contents from various periodicals (more than 150, in the initial list). The name of this publication is Rijstebrij, it costs 75 guilders per year (18.50 for October-December 1982), and it may be ordered from the NBLC, postbus 93054, 2509 AB Den Haag, the Netherlands.

Scientific documentation course

Over the period October 1982 - July 1983, a post-doctoral course for specialists in scientific information and documentation will be conducted by the Universities of Grenoble and Lyon, under joint sponsorship of MIDIST and the French Commission for UNESCO. Fee for the French-language course is FF1,700.

Breakthrough

For many years now, researchers have been attempting to develop an effective technique for computer input and display of Chinese

characters. A successful outcome has recently been announced by two in-
stitutions: the University of Melbourne in Australia, and the Chinese
University of Hong Kong. At the latter, Professor Loh Shiu-chang has
developed a keyboard, "the result of fifty man-years' work", which
involves 256 keys - eighteen of these being 'function' keys. Characters
can be entered with an average of 2.7 strokes, and they appear as hand-
some ideograms on a connected visual display unit. A trained operator
can achieve a speed of 4,000 characters per hour. Professor Loh's work
was motivated by a strong belief in the possibility of adapting new
technology to use within the Chinese linguistic and cultural
tradition. In his opinion, it was essential that computer systems be
modified to fit the Chinese, instead of Chinese being modified to fit
in the computer.

All not well on Sixteenth Street?

Having realized already for fiscal year 1981 a considerable financial
deficit, and having been subject for some time to widespread criticism
from members and others on various counts including that of mismanage-
ment, the American Society for Information Science has now received,
before expiration of her term, a letter of resignation from its presi-
dent, Ruth Tighe. The letter contained a number of rather unflattering
observations regarding the organization.

People

Russell Rowlett, Editor of CAS since 1967, will retire in October of
1982. Associated with the Columbus, Ohio, service since 1946 (he began
as a volunteer abstractor), the much-honoured Rowlett has presided over
editorial development of Chemical Abstracts in an era that emphasized
the computer. He has been a vital force in CAS and information affairs
and will be greatly missed. Rowlett will be honored at an anniversary
symposium and dinner at the September 1982 ACS meeting.

CAS has named Charles N. Costakos to be manager of its customer ser-
vices department. The newly created post will handle subscription ful-
fillment, customer relations, and market information analysis. Ann
Messmore has been appointed manager of the marketing and business deve-
lopment department. Functions include planning, sales, government rela-
tions, contract support and administration.

Jan Egeland has been replaced as BRS president by William Marovitz,
who was formerly with the Information Technology Group of Indian Head,
to which BRS belongs.

J.W. Simpson has been named president of Mead Data Central.

New president at ABC-Clio is Ronald J. Boehm, taking over from his
father, Eric H. Boehm.

M. Lynne Neufeld, Executive Director of NFAIS, has been elected to
the Executive Council of Committee Z39, American National Standards In-
stitute, for a term ending 1 July 1985. Z39 is concerned with standards
for "library and information sciences and related publishing
practices".

The new Uninet president is William McDonald.

Trends

Better times ahead for information scientists?

"I have recently heard that three of the Fortune 500 companies have acknowledged that they are no longer seeking persons with M.B.A.s for management positions: instead, they are recruiting people with master's degrees in information science. This may sound like a small number of companies, but this indicates that more and more organizations will be seeking employees with information-related skills." This from Samuel Beatty, Executive Director of ASIS, in Information and the Transformation of Society, pp. 300-301, to be published in November by North-Holland.

EC technology clearing house

Out of a "technological awareness" seminar conducted on June 2nd of this year in Luxemburg, has come a recommendation for the establishment of a "European Technological Awareness Unit", among whose tasks it would be to receive, translate and redistribute "items of technological information". The notion seems so far to be only vaguely defined, but a feasibility study will be launched, presumably by the European Commission, in order to prepare for its implementation.

French withdraw TITUS, SDC shocked

In a development that may have international overtones, the Institut Textile de France has withdrawn its TITUS data base (English-language version) from SDC's Orbit service. An SDC spokesman attributed the withdrawal to a continuing French effort to support intranational systems and telecommunications programs. ITF has indicated that it was not satisfied with SDC's updating of the file. TITUS remains available (in both French and English versions) via the on-line vendor Télésystèmes-QUESTEL, which maintains a satellite-link to its French computer center from its US installation.

Academic communications

Mailnet is the name given to an experimental project for establishing electronic message connections (with file-transfer capability) among a number of US universities and colleges, the central switching mechanism being located at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. One overseas institution - the University of Stockholm - is also presently participating, and it is anticipated that the network will in mid-1983 be opened to use by all US and foreign academic institutions wishing to

take part. The project has received financial support from the Carnegie Corporation, toward the meeting of developmental expenses. Contact: Sheldon B. Smith or Elizabeth Kilcoyne, Educom/Edunet, P.O. Box 364, Princeton, NJ 08540, USA; tel.: (609)734-1915, or 734-1878.