

## EXCITING FALL MEETING

The Fall ASIDIC Meeting held in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia, dealt with the smoldering subject of "The Reuse and Repackaging of Bibliographic Information: Issues and Problems." The formal program began with Richard Huleatt, President of Information Intelligence, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona, introducing session attendees to the concepts and techniques of data downloading. He remarked that downloading was here to stay and that we should accept it as a way of life.

Following Mr. Huleatt were four speakers expert on various aspects of the meeting's theme. Mitchell Krasny, National Technical Information Service, spoke on the technological problems of downloading. Arthur Elias, Biosciences Information Service, covered the economic issues from the vendors' point of view. Judy Burnam, Executive Office of the President, represented the end users' concerns. Dr. Margaret Park, University of Georgia, introduced reporting and accountability.

As is the usual ASIDIC custom, the membership divided into smaller discussion groups to allow all attendees to participate and express their own thoughts, ideas, and views about various issues raised by the panel. A full summary of the meeting follows.

The sessions were well-received by all attendees, and discussions carried over into the social hour. Monday evening saw over 120 individuals board the Potomac River boat, Dandy Dan, for a dinner cruise on the Washington Basin. Unfortunately, the moon was full and the river tide high, meaning that the boat could not pass under the 14th Street bridge. No one really noticed that they never reached the historic DC sites.

## ELECTIONS

As called for by the ASIDIC Constitution, elections for new officers were held at the recent Fall Meeting. Dr. Rita Lerner, American Institute of Physics, was elected as President. Elmer Fisher, Babcock & Wilcox, and David Grooms, National Technical Information Service, will serve on the Executive Committee for two years. Continuing on the committee are Kay Durkin, BRS; Dan Wilde, NERAC; and Paul Zurkowski, IIA.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Spring Meeting, 1982, has been set for New York City for March 21, 22 & 23 in the Sheraton Hotel at 56th Street and 7th Avenue. The Planning Committee has recommended further examination of the issues left unresolved at the last meeting. Mark your calendar and come to NYC. The hotel sits just north of Broadway. This would be a good time to see a show. More later.

## THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP

A volunteer organization takes the efforts of all its members to be successful. At the Fall Meeting, Dan Wilde, now former President, thanked the many individuals who had helped him during the past two years. In particular, he expressed his gratitude to Ron Smith, Biosis, for his valuable advice, and Margaret Park, University of Georgia, for her work as Standards Committee Chair. Both individuals retired from the Executive Committee at the Fall Meeting. All of ASIDIC is grateful for their help.

## FALL MEETING REVIEW

ASIDIC Members who missed the Fall Meeting are fortunate that Don Hawkins has volunteered to provide us with his meeting report. Don is Group Supervisor, Information Retrieval and Alerting Service at Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey. He is responsible for the Information Re-

trieval Service and several of the current awareness services of the Bell Laboratories Library Network. He has been active in the field of online retrieval since its introduction at Bell Labs and has just completed a chapter on it for the *Annual Review*

*of Information Science & Technology*. Before joining Bell Labs, he was a Research Metallurgist at the University of California, where he received his Ph.D. degree.

Don – thanks from all of us for your report.

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THE REUSE AND REPACKAGING OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:  
ISSUES AND PROBLEMS  
(ASIDIC Conference Report)

Donald T. Hawkins  
Libraries and Information Systems Center  
Bell Laboratories  
Murray Hill, NJ 07974

*Introduction*

The fall meeting of the Association of Information Dissemination Centers (ASIDIC) was held September 13-15, 1981 at Alexandria, VA. The initial announcement of the meeting stated:

“Intelligent, highspeed online terminals now make it possible to download data base subsets for later offline manipulation . . . Organizations are now building tertiary data bases by merging offline appropriate subsets of secondary data bases. Almost daily, new ways of reusing and repackaging information are announced. Data base producers claim they should be compensated for reuse of their information. In contrast, consumers feel this reuse should be free.”

The issue of downloading, reuse, reformatting, repackaging, or retransmission of bibliographic information has suddenly become of great interest to many online searchers.

The meeting opened with a keynote talk by Richard Huleatt (Information Intelligence, Inc., Phoenix, AZ). Huleatt's talk was followed by four presentations on bibliographic information repackaging and reuse from various points of view. The attendees then divided into five discussion groups, explored the issues in more detail, and reconvened to hear reports from the discussion groups.

*Keynote Presentation*

In a thought-provoking and stimulating presentation, Huleatt set the tone of the conference by creating an “information awareness” among the attendees. He reviewed the advances of science and technology in the past decade that have had a profound effect on the dissemination of information; new methods are being used constantly. Online searching has been one of the biggest advances in the information field, but it has raised issues such as:

- Who should pay for what?
- How are documents to be retrieved?
- How long should it take to fill requests?
- What are the proper contract terms to ensure fair return to the producer of the information and the vendor, without being burdensome or unreasonable to the user?

In the course of his information brokerage business, Huleatt contacted many database producers asking for permission to copy output from online searches in machine-readable form and then repackage it. He received a wide variety of responses, from ready acceptance of his proposal to outright denial. Some database producers were not equipped to deal with his request and did not know what to do with it. Such variation of policy shows that the downloading issue is pressing and urgent. It needs to be addressed in a rational and explicit manner.

Repackaging information is not new; the abstract services have been doing it for years. Huleatt raised the question whether a publisher could hinder the dissemination of information by prohibiting an abstract service from including its publications. He cited the example of his own company which does not allow

anyone to index its newsletter (*Information Intelligence Online Newsletter*) because it produces and sells the index.

Huleatt concluded with the following predictions on the future of information industry:

1. Downloading of bibliographic data will become a way of life.
2. Advanced technologies such as videodiscs will greatly alter libraries, information centers, and end user services.
3. Present-day information centers will be consolidated into "information warehouses," and there will be a large increase in the number of information producers.
4. Books are here to stay, but they will be repackaged to suit the needs of consumers. There will be a corresponding revolution in the education system.

The information warehouse is needed today, but under new rules for information usage. Development of the rules will be dictated by technology, not librarians, users, or information producers. It is even probable that information frequently will not need to be redelivered – the end user will get it directly at a terminal instead of from a library or information center. Information centers will still exist, however, to provide service to users who lack the necessary software and hardware.

#### *Formal Presentations on Information Reuse*

- I. "Technology – the Problems and the Solutions"  
Mitchell Krasny, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA.

In Krasny's view, the concern in downloading is not so much with the user who performs a small one-time search and wishes to reformat it, but more with the "information pirate" who wishes to capture a large portion of a database and then deny income to the producer and vendor by conducting future searches on his own computer, or, worse, by reselling searches at lower rates than the vendor's. Krasny divided the downloading problem into four technological areas:

1. Communicating the data from supplier to user,
2. Storing the data in the user's hardware,
3. Manipulating the data by the user's software, and
4. Outputting the data.

Today's communication methods impose limitations on a would-be pirate. Even at 1200 baud, it is expensive to transfer large amounts of data. Typically, over 2-½ hours are needed to copy 1000 records. A vendor can detect long, uninterrupted sessions of one-way communication from host to user and can alert the producer to possible piracy. Communications technology, therefore, is a major barrier to the unauthorized copying of large portions of databases. Storage technology is less of a barrier, especially using optical or video disks. Minicomputers are becoming more and more powerful, and one would expect soon to see a complete bibliographic searching software package available for them. Finally, output may pose a problem for illegal users of a database if they attempt to market their products commercially. It is difficult to describe data without disclosing its source. Technology is undoubtedly advancing, but there seem to be some barriers which database owners can exploit to hinder widespread pirating of their data.

- II. "Pricing Strategies and the Impact of Pricing on Data Base Producers, Vendors, and Users"  
Arthur Elias, Biosciences Information Service, Philadelphia, PA.

Online searching was originally a by-product of printed databases, and this fact still pervades most pricing strategies. However, we are beginning to see changes as producers institute two-tier pricing, obligatory subscriptions as a condition of access to some or all of the database, and online print charges.

From the producer's viewpoint, prediction of revenues from printed products is often simple since the entire publication is purchased in advance, and the producer can use these advance payments. In the online case, there is no advance payment, and revenues are therefore difficult to estimate. Furthermore, in the print case one must purchase the *entire* database to use it; in the online case, one is using only a small portion of the database. From the vendors' viewpoint, revenue is tied to usage, so it is to their advantage to maximize usage. The by-product nature of online databases affects the user, who sees revenue from the

databases as “gravy” and therefore objects to rising royalties. There are, therefore, several possibilities for conflict in determining pricing strategies; compromise and reason are needed to avoid chaos in the online industry. Higher charges are probably inevitable, however.

### III. “The User Point of View on Repackaging and Reuse”

Judy Burnam, Office of the U. S. Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC.

A large portion of the end users of online services are libraries which market services to their clients. They need collections, reference tools, and databases. They must deliver information to their users, who demand timeliness and relevance and who are also becoming more sophisticated. Online systems help to meet these needs, but their outputs may be unintelligible or poorly formatted. Reformatting helps to sell library services and products, increasing the library’s worth to the organization. Libraries, therefore, need to be able to reformat information from online searches, annotate it, merge output from several databases, sort it, insert instructions for obtaining documents, and so on. Restrictions on database use tend to hinder this information flow, and charges are a problem for libraries on shrinking budgets.

### IV. “Reporting and Accountability”

Margaret Park, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Repackaging is desirable and inevitable; therefore, a means of accounting for it needs to be developed. We can find repackaging models in the music recording and broadcasting industries. Reporting requirements must be reasonable and not burdensome, and they must be economically practical. Bureaucratic systems designed to account for many small uses may cost more than they recover and may drive users away, or they may encourage circumventing the system. Low volume reuse may be beneficial because it is a good marketing tool; piracy for profit is different. Park concluded with four recommendations:

1. Multiple reporting and accounting systems will be necessary.
2. Technology should be used to solve many reporting and accounting problems.
3. Strict enforcement of copyright laws may be “penny-wise, pound-foolish.”
4. New revenue should come from new services, not from further exploiting present ones.

#### *Discussion Groups*

The discussion groups were each structured to contain representatives from all segments of the information community – producers, vendors, and users. Discussion was frank and lively, and, interestingly, each of the five groups appeared to arrive at virtually the same conclusions.

A major problem is the definition of terms. The following were proposed:

- **Reformatting:** Capturing the information in machine-readable form and selecting the fields to be retained – an “electronic cut-and-paste.”
- **Editing:** Correction of errors, expansion of acronyms, unification of journal abbreviations, etc.
- **Repackaging:** Rearrangement of data, annotation, addition of a cover sheet, expansion of field labels, etc.
- **Multiple Use (Reuse):** Transmission of the data to several or many users, making multiple copies of it.
- **Resale:** Selling the information commercially.
- **Database Creation:** Creation of a subsidiary database for searching by the user.

General agreement seemed to emerge on the following points:

1. Reformatting, editing, and repackaging *for one-time use* is probably “fair use” of the information and should be permitted routinely, without additional cost and without the need to obtain special permission from the database producer. (Such permission is readily given now by many of the producers, but special application must be made for each use.) There was some question as to whether the retention of a reference copy of the data would be permissible.
2. Multiple use, resale, and database creation require special agreements with the producer, probably

involving royalty payments.

3. The payment mechanism must be simple and practical. Complicated accounting systems will inhibit use of the information, may encourage circumventing the system, and may drive users away from using the databases. Exorbitant royalty fees will have the same effects.
4. Standardization of databases, long an elusive ideal, is even more desirable now, so that reformatting the data and combining the output from many databases into one bibliography can be done easily. Unfortunately, standardization is probably impossible.

#### *Conclusion*

This conference was stimulating and timely. The ASIDIC Program Committee is to be commended for providing a forum where the issue of reuse of information could be openly discussed.