

ASIDIC newsletter

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ASSOCIATION OF INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION CENTERS

SPRING MEETING CONTINUES DISCUSSION ON REUSE & REPACKAGING; ASIDIC POSITION PAPER TO BE PREPARED

The first ASIDIC Spring Meeting to be held in New York City occurred on March 21-23, 1982, at the New York Sheraton Hotel. It was the third meeting devoted to the complex subject of Reuse and Repackaging of Information. Following on the very successful Fall Meeting in Alexandria, the Spring Meeting attendees attempted to lay the groundwork for an ASIDIC position paper on the subject.

The meeting opened with a keynote address by Margaret (Peggy) Fischer of LINK Associates, who presented an overview of the information industry today and some possible future directions. Peggy was followed by three speakers from outside of ASIDIC: Daniel Sullivan (Frost & Sullivan) representing an information producer, Andrew Garvin (FIND/SVP) representing an information broker, and Stella Keenan (Loughborough University) representing the end user. A recurring theme in these presentations was that information is *meant* to be reused, and many providers are anxious for this to occur. Following the speakers, the meeting divided into smaller discussion groups, each examining a different aspect of the subject. From the work of these three groups, a draft ASIDIC position paper will be developed by Marvin Wilson (NTIS), Program Committee Chairman.

The sessions stimulated lively discussions and were well-received. The environment was congenial and comfortable. A business meeting was held on Monday morning and took only 11 minutes (which must be a record), allowing attendees time to finish their bagels and cream cheese. The Monday evening entertainment was "New York style," which included watching the hotel staff drop a baby grand piano and having attendees' palms read as they listened to cocktail music. Those attending are now entitled to refer to themselves as "The Fortune 100."

A full summary of the meeting presentations appears in this Newsletter.

A PLEA

This is the first issue of the ASIDIC Newsletter that I have edited. I thank the Executive Committee for their confidence and look forward to their--and your--continuing support. This Newsletter is for *your* communication; it is not meant to be a one-person effort. Please send me items for publication. All contributions and suggestions will be most welcome!

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Details of future ASIDIC meetings are given below. Mark your calendar.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Host</i>
September 19-21, 1982	Boston, MA	Dan Wilde (NERAC)
March 20-22, 1983	Charleston, SC	David Grooms (NTIS)
September 18-20, 1983	Philadelphia, PA	Ron Smith (BIOSIS)

The next fall meeting will be held at the Sheraton Commander Hotel, 16 Garden St., Cambridge, MA.

By popular demand, Dan has promised us a repeat of the last Boston meeting's clambake held at the New England Aquarium. That alone should make the meeting worth attending!

PUBLICATION OF ASIDIC MEETING PAPERS

At the New York meeting, Art Elias announced that the papers from the Alexandria and the New York meetings will be published in *Information Services and Use*, which he edits. The Alexandria papers are expected in the May, 1982 issue.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

At the New York meeting, Rita Lerner, ASIDIC President, announced the following committee changes: Kay Durkin (BRS) has resigned as Secretary/Treasurer and has been replaced by David Grooms (NTIS). (Kay remains on the Executive Committee.) Donald Hawkins (Bell Laboratories) has been appointed Newsletter Editor, and James Cape (Department of Energy, Oak Ridge National Laboratory) is Finance Committee Chairman. For your reference, a list of ASIDIC officers and committee chairmen for 1981-1982 is attached.

NEW MEMBER

ASIDIC welcomes Bell Laboratories as a new member. Bell Labs is the research and development unit of AT&T; its library staff have long been active in the information world. The Bell Labs representative is Donald Hawkins, (201)-582-6517.

SPRING MEETING SUMMARY

Identification of Issues and Views

Margaret (Peggy) Fischer, LINK Resources, Inc.

Information is meant to be used and reused. To supplement extensive original research, LINK reformats information, packages it, sells it, and hopes that users keep on using their products. If there are too many restrictions and caveats on using information, the providers will be out of business. Value lies in user creativity—what counts is timeliness, relevance, and orderliness. The information provider is analogous to the automobile dealer selling a vehicle. When the vehicle is used in a profit-making venture, the dealer does not get a part of the revenues, nor are they responsible for shortcomings of the business. Many information providers may have a fear of the electronic age. What is the value of information when it is buried in a database along with a lot of other information? Its value lies in the use of the information, its analysis, etc. Questions change; repetition should not be feared because very few questions can be answered by exactly the same information.

LINK, a market research firm specializing in electronic information and media services, is acutely aware of the concerns of the information industry, including:

- Government agency competition
- Surcharges on fee-based services
- Losing title to the provider's data by electronic capture of it
- Acceptance of new technology
- Monitoring use (which is probably impossible)
- Multiple copying

Information brokers want databases in new subject areas, better mapping of results across existing services, (especially business-oriented information) and merged bibliographies. FIND spent \$175,000 on online searches last year, answering 10,000 questions for 6,000 users, and using 11 systems.

Peggy gave an overview of the information brokering business. Large fee-based services have large corporations as their clients. Much of their business comes by phone, largely from marketing and R&D departments. Brokers are generally MBA's, lawyers, etc. Their fees are usually about \$75/hour. Medium-sized brokers are usually librarians. 20-80% of their clients are in large corporations, 20-50% are in government, and 5-15% are in non-profit organizations. Fees range from \$25-\$50 per hour. Small-sized information brokerage firms are usually located near major cities. 61% of them use online services, and 80% of their clients are local or in the same state. Their fees are usually in the \$25-\$30/hour range.

In the information industry, the largest revenues are earned by source producers and distributors. They make data available over multiple channels, and the more successful they are, the more channels they use (excepting those that are directed towards closed user groups or specific job or industry services). In 1980, gross revenues in the industry were in the \$1 billion area. LINK forecasts that this will rise to \$1.6 billion in

1982 and \$3.4 billion by 1985. The personal computer will play a major role in the information industry. There are 1.8 million of them today, and the software market for them is expanding rapidly. While most of them are used for business purposes, the home market cannot be ignored; about 2.5 million homes will have access to online information by 1985. The electronic information industry is mainly financial, but it is growing into a wide range of services, from teleshopping and banking to news retrieval.

LINK recently did a study of the information industry and found the following growth figures:

	Revenues (\$ millions)	
	1980	1985 (Est.)
Reference Databases	63	206
Independent Database Providers	169	834
Credit Databases	290	688
Financial Databases	182	678
Econometric Databases	89	402
Real Estate	35	99
Industrial Databases	29	54
Law and Government	26	121
Marketing	18	41
Sci-Tech	14	34
Demographic Databases	11	54
News	2	100

The following are the main database users:

<i>Type of Database</i>	<i>Users</i>
Financial and economic	Middle-level professionals
Econometric	Economists and executives in big companies
Stock quotes	Brokers and analysts, increasingly with personal computers
Market research	Analysts, marketing intermediaries
Chemical properties	End-user scientists

People want user-friendly systems, more detailed data, more pre-calculated figures, more cost-effective services, and more substances in chemical properties databases. It is important for databases to be timely, have detailed coverage, historical depth, document generation facilities, and producer support. Accuracy and reliability are taken for granted by users. End users want detailed analytical data, regional information, flexibility of choice, timeliness, more company information, applications programs, the ability to merge outputs, and tiered (time-of-day or use-of-service) pricing.

Peggy stressed user friendliness. It came up over and over again in LINK's studies. The spread of videotex is one reason for the drive towards user friendly systems. The personal computer is having a tremendous impact on the end user market. Often, it is being used as an all-purpose terminal. Possible applications are telemail, teleshopping, telebanking.

Peggy's talk was a fascinating overview of a fast-moving industry. It is clear that users are rapidly becoming more sophisticated, and to survive, information providers will have to change and adapt their products and strategies to the marketplace.

The Information Producer's Point of View
Daniel Sullivan, Frost & Sullivan

Mr. Sullivan recounted some experiences with a database that was a failure. It was one of the first commercial databases and was available on magnetic tape in 1961. It contained announcements of U.S. government contract awards in the defense area. It failed because it was useful to only a few users who were professional and aggressive. It was a capability, not a product and required extensive user training to use it.

Many people stop at capability, but capability is only the first step to a product. Mr. Sullivan feels that people wanting to sell an information product should approach line people, not staff. You can sell to line people directly at a lower price; staff people get the capability at a higher price. You must become a soothsayer and make your database useful for forecasting. Frost & Sullivan began to prosper when they began to forecast and prepare reports based on their forecasts; they were poor until then. The cause of most failures in the information business lies in the confusion between products and capabilities. So you should be glad when people want to repackage and reuse your product. It will then become more useful to users and will have a wider application. The repackager is not stealing; he is making information more useful and accessible.

The Information Broker's Point of View
Andrew Garvin, FIND/SVP

FIND/SVP is one of the largest information retailers, with about 750 retainer clients. They have just become a producer as well because their database of market reports and studies is now online. By their definition, FIND does not either reuse or repackage information. They access over 300 databases through most available systems and pay about \$250,000/year for online services. They usually forward offline prints to the requester exactly as they are received from the search vendor. In order to overcome the slowness of the mails, they have developed the FIND/SEND service in which they record the search on a floppy disk and transmit it electronically to the user's terminal, after which the disk is erased. They wrote about 300 letters to database producers and obtained permission to do this kind of transmission. They view themselves as an agent for the client. There is no control over what the client does with the results, but FIND thinks there is no reuse or repackaging. Most of their searches are used for individual research projects. Clients are reminded of the law when they receive search output. Although FIND does not change the output in any way, Garvin suggested that it may be to the database producer's advantage to have the information reformatted if it were done so that the end user could use the information easier. Since clients have trouble interpreting the output, FIND has prepared a guide to each database telling the user what the abbreviations are, etc. It might be better to simply reformat it so that clients would understand better.

The End User's Point of View
Stella Keenan, Loughborough University

Users are becoming more sophisticated, so there is a growing demand for user friendly systems. Information must be provided when needed, as wanted, and in a cost-effective way. The old packaging is still there, but new technology is coming; users want timely, organized, relevant, and up-to-date information. We cannot estimate the amount of repackaging that will be needed because of varied environments; however, it is certain that downloading will soon become a way of life. Keenan suggested that the machine-readable file is the product, and everything else is a by-product. Perhaps charges should be made for the by-products, not the product itself. When we buy a book, we don't pay every time we use it. Books, however, are static and are not regularly updated. A database is dynamic and can be regularly changed or revised. A sliding scale of pricing encourages users to start using these sources. We need to worry about nonbibliographic databases (fact files) because there are more of them than bibliographic ones. There will be more interlinked files, more interface programs, and more manipulation of data by the end user.

Keenan gave a description of the U.K. videotex systems, such as Ceefax, Oracle, and Prestel. Oracle is a broadcast (Teletex) system, Prestel is an interactive viewdata system using telephone lines, and Ceefax is a non-interactive system where the information rolls by all the time. About 95% of the U.K. has access to one of these systems. They are used by both business and home users; Prestel is now available in some public libraries. Electronic shopping, such as telebanking and teleshopping is beginning to appear.

Working Groups

The working groups considered the following three subjects, from which a draft ASIDIC position paper will be derived:

1. Reuse and repackaging that is and is not subject to fees,
2. Elements on which fees should be based,
3. Controls and procedures to regulate payment of fees.

Group 1: Reuse and repackaging that is and is not subject to fees.

Reuse is being done now, and it will continue. We should not limit users because the technology is available. Reuse is acceptable if paid for. Records should be attributed to the database from which they were taken. If they are edited, they must not be distorted or falsified. Contract changes are probably the simplest way to solve the reuse issue. There should be multi-tiered pricing for different levels of usage. Most users are honest and will pay if there is a simple mechanism to do so. A restrictive system will only cause users to attempt to circumvent it. This group did not agree on specific products to charge for, but did agree that any use not specified in the original contract constitutes reuse and needs to be approved and/or paid for.

Group 2: Elements on which fees should be based.

A six tier structure was proposed which covers most of the present situations:

1. Single user, single use.
This is the existing case for most uses. The "single user" could be an individual or a department. Reformatting, deleting, and editing would be permitted. Storage for archival reference would be permitted. Merging of output from several databases in a report is permitted. If the user is an intermediary, electronic transmission to the end user is permitted, but a copyright statement should appear.
2. Single user, multiple use.
A user retrieves and stores a record in a private database. In this case, "user" means the end user, not an intermediary.
3. Multiple user, single use.
This is the standard SDI case where records are transmitted to the user and may be batched for output as individual profiles for individual use. After processing, the records are purged.
4. Multiple user, multiple copy.
This provides for unrestricted use within an organization when multiple copies are made from a search, such as in the case of newsletters, bibliographies etc. Editing, combining, and deleting are permitted, as is electronic transmission, but not storage for reuse.
5. Multiple user, multiple use.
Within an organization, any use may be made of the information. This covers the usual tape lease arrangement, but it could also include large-scale transmission of records through a vendor.
6. Resale.
A contractual arrangement between producer and seller.

Pricing options could take the form of a usage charge based on time, hits, or a combination; a reproduction charge with a surcharge based on the number of copies distributed; or negotiated fees. At the conclusion of each search, before the print command, the vendor could supply the user with a menu of options, and the user would state the purpose of the search. The vendor will inform the user of the price of the search including surcharges. The pricing algorithm would be negotiated between the producer and the vendor. Producers could restrict the users' options if desired. The vendors will monitor the records transmitted. Over a preset threshold, multiple user, multiple use pricing will apply.

The advantages of this approach are that users would have to state the purpose of their searches. Pricing could be automatic after that. The vendors can now get some of the multiple-use revenue; at present, this is not available to them. The disadvantages are that no real enforcement mechanism exists, and users will object to having to state their intentions for every search.

Group 3: Reporting and control procedures.

Reporting and payment should be made to database vendors who will pass revenues on to the producers. Payments should be monthly. One way to control payments is to create a "downloading format" which would have the charges associated with it. There could also be a "reproduction format" with its own pricing structure. The vendors would be entitled to collect an administration fee from the user for this service.

The "information unit" must be defined. For bibliographic databases, this is straightforward; with nonbibliographic databases definition is not so easy.

Whatever payment system is established, it must be *simple*. Users do not want to write a plethora of letters, nor do they want a complex reporting and accounting mechanism. Users must be comfortable with the system. Most use is going to be as now--single user, single use. This should be the default; anything else should be covered by the system.

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