

RSC Newsletter – January 2001

Electronic Access to Published Papers in Chemistry

Burlington House, London

March 15th 2001

CIG continues its successful series of meetings with what should be an outstanding meeting. The advent of the world-wide web and electronic publishing is changing the face of scholarly publishing beyond all recognition. The trend away from journals towards access to individual papers is already starting, but how far has it gone and how far will it go?

This one-day meeting will address this topic. Fytton Rowland, Loughborough University, will provide an overview of the development of the information infrastructure which has made electronic access to papers possible. Then Professor Stevan Harnad, Southampton University, will present a key paper, in which he proposes a mechanism by which access to published papers can be provided free (yes, free!). If you have not yet heard about this proposal it is a paper not to be missed. James Weeks of Chemweb will talk about their chemistry preprint server, Michael Mabe of Reed Elsevier will present the views of traditional publishers, and Carolyn Alderson of leading document delivery supplier Swets Blackwell will talk about aggregation and rights management. Finally, Mike Hannant of the RSC will talk about the SPARC initiative.

The meeting costs just £15 to members and £25 to non-members, including lunch. Student discounts are also available. Details of the meeting and a registration form are enclosed with this Newsletter.

Please note that the Group's AGM will take place during this meeting. Further details are given below.

Programme

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| 10.00-10.30 | Registration and coffee |
| 10.30-10.40 | Chairman's welcome and introduction - Doug Veal, Doverton Ltd. |
| 10.40-11.25 | Introduction - the development of the electronic infrastructure - Fytton Rowland, Loughborough University |
| 11.25-12.15 | How and why to free the refereed research literature through author/institution self-archiving - Stevan Harnad, Southampton University |
| 12.15-12.45 | Chemical Information Group AGM (non-members may attend or take the opportunity for a breath of fresh air) |
| 12.45-1.45 | Lunch |
| 1.45-2.15 | The Chemistry Preprint Server - James Weeks, ChemWeb |
| 2.15-2.45 | The publisher's perspective - Michael Mabe, Reed Elsevier |
| 2.45-3.15 | Aggregation and Rights Management - Carolyn Alderson, Swets Blackwell |
| 3.15-3.35 | Tea |
| 3.35-4.00 | The SPARC initiative - Mike Hannant, RSC |

Balancing the Budget:

Cost Effectiveness of Provision of Chemical Information

Around 35 people attended this one-day joint meeting of the Chemical Structure Association and the CIG at Burlington House on October 4th 2000. The talks were organised so that views of different interest groups (suppliers, intermediaries, users) could be heard.

Dr. John Buckingham (Chapman & Hall/CRC Press), posed some interesting questions, with only part answers, in an effort to get everyone thinking about the problems involved with Chemical Information. The general tenor of his remarks was that we now can have so much "information" available that this in itself can be a problem. This information overload means that intermediaries are necessary, and he listed several searching questions which customers ought to be asking of their suppliers. He was followed by Dr. Julian Hayward (Synopsys), who reviewed his firm's products, and in this process stressed the importance of selectivity in providing information, that a good user interface is essential, and that the better systems are those produced by chemists for chemists - features which are applicable to any product in this area.

The next two speakers were representing intermediaries, i.e. organisations which do not necessarily sell databases or other information, but offer access to them. Dave Fletcher gave the view of Daresbury Chemical Information Service, which is used by the UK academic community. The centralised provision of the service offers a considerable cost saving to the users (approx. 2500, cost ~£100/user/year), and allows for support, training, and information about the databases held. Carolyn Anderson (Swets/Blackwell) described how centralised purchasing of both paper & electronic journals, and specialised search access to a wide range of journals, can significantly reduce the cost of traditional library facilities by saving administration work.

After lunch, a portal view was provided by Jan Kuras of Chemweb. This organisation attempts to provide a one-site service for all information requirements of chemists. It currently has over 200,000 registered users, who can access over 170 journals and 35 databases on-line, thus possibly replacing or duplicating the role of a learned society. It also offers a virtual shopping mall for books, software and & lab. equipment. Helen Schofield from UMIST followed with the academic user viewpoint, where costs are always a major problem in the provision of information. Most chemists really need to use SciFinder, but few Universities can afford it (only six in the U.K. have it). Electronic journal access is another problem, where most organisations (RSC is a notable exception) charge 15% above the cost of the printed copy, but then offer free access to their other titles - which may be largely irrelevant to most chemists.

The final user viewpoint was from Sue Jackson (Roche). Pharmaceutical companies are huge users of chemical information, but even there, costs and use must be justified, despite the spending being on a large scale (70M\$/year worldwide, including telecoms hardware, for 3,600 scientific staff on six sites). The guiding principles are - Is it needed? Can it be done? Is it in line with objectives? Interestingly, support and maintenance is about 80% of the resource cost. In the end, it is the use of the information which is important. The meeting closed with an overview from Fytton Rowland (Loughborough Univ.), who showed that he had been hard at work during the meeting by producing one-line key-point summaries of the seven talks, with additional comments and thoughts of his own, the key point being that Chemistry is different! There is a huge industrial market for information, with lots of value in secondary services, whereas the academic market can't afford as much as it would like, and faces demands from its students who expect everything on the web!

Peter Regan

[PowerPoint versions](#) of some of the presentations can be found on the CIG Web Site.

The Chemical Information Sources Discussion List, CHMINF-L

The Chemical Information Sources Discussion List, CHMINF-L, is a discussion list for all those involved in any way with chemical information. The Chemical Information Group has been one of its sponsors for a number of years. The list is organised by Gary Wiggins, Head of the Indiana University Chemistry Library.

The list serves as a forum for discussion of, and an information source for, chemistry reference questions and the sources used to find information needed by chemists. CHMINF-L was founded in April 1991 through the computer resources of Indiana University. Sponsoring professional organizations are: ACS Division of Chemical Information; American Society for Information Science Special Interest Group on Scientific and Technical Information Systems; Chemical Structure Association; RSC Chemical Information Group; Special Libraries Association Chemistry Division. Other supporters include Prof. Peter Willett, American Cyanamid and Rohm and Haas.

The list currently has nearly 1300 subscribers. Members of the CIG are entitled to use it. You need to register, but it is free. You can also take a look to get a flavour of its content, as described below. You will need access to the Internet, of course.

As with most discussion lists, the contents cover a wide range of issues. These include announcements of new developments, publications and software, reviews, information on jobs and salaries, albeit with a bias towards the USA, and the usual question-and-answer correspondence on many and varied topics. Current ones include:

- Request for information on the history of patenting
- Discussion of some of the curious phenomena arising from the theory of relativity
- How to search for deuterated substances in SciFinder
- How to synthesise 2,6-dimethyltriazine

To subscribe, send mail to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU with the command: SUBSCRIBE CHMINF-L. For more information, you can :

- Take a look at the list's configuration at: <http://listserv.indiana.edu/archives/chminf-l.html>
- Contact the list owner at: CHMINF-L-request@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU
- Check the other lists at LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU

The content and quality is very varied, and information supplied comes with no guarantees, of course. Nevertheless, the list does provide an easy way of tapping into the total world pool of expertise in chemical information. So, if you have a tricky problem or request, its certainly worth giving it a try.

Doug Veal

The Changing Face of Information Provision in an ever changing Chemical Industry

3rd October 2001, Burlington House

There has been much rationalization throughout the chemical industry over the past few years. Some of this has resulted in the closure of information departments and loss of centralized facilities such as libraries. In other organizations there has been a merger of information departments. This meeting hopes to put forward the differing perspectives of the Information Department, the Chemists, the Recruitment Agency /Information Consultancy and the Information Provider/Online Vendor. Further details will be circulated in due course.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2001 Annual General Meeting of the RSC Chemical Information Group will be held at Burlington House, London, on March 15th, 2001 at 12.15 p.m. It will take place during the meeting on *Electronic Access to Published Papers on Chemistry*. There is no charge for members wishing to attend just the AGM.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence***
- 2. Minutes of the 2000 AGM***
- 3. Matters arising***
- 4. Secretary's report***
- 5. Treasurer's report***
- 6. Election of Officers and Committee Members***
- 7. Nomination of Auditors***
- 8. Annual subscription 2002***
- 9. Any other business***

Highlights from the Chemical Database Service, Daresbury

The year 2000 has seen a number of changes to CDS. Web access has been made available to a number of databases such as ICSD, SpecInfo (SpecSurf) and, more recently, the Organic Synthesis databases (via ReactionWeb). LitLink has been installed providing automatic linking from citations retrieved using the ISIS Reaction Browser (via an Add-in) or ReactionWeb to the primary literature.

The Organic Synthesis databases have been extended and now include BioCatalysis from Synopsys, bringing the total number of reactions to over 1 Million. SpecInfo now contains Mass Spectra data and an additional 2,500 H-NMR spectra while ConQuest, a new interface for the Cambridge Structural Database, is currently available via X-windows.

For more information see <http://cds.dl.ac.uk/cds/>

STN Corner

CA Lexicon on STN

CA Lexicon on STN is a powerful thesaurus tool for guiding searchers through the intricacies of CAS indexing. The principal features are a Concept/General Subject vocabulary; a Taxonomic vocabulary for biological genus and species terms; and Compound classes, including the chemical substances most frequently indexed by CAS, common synonyms and relationships. For more information see <http://www.cas.org>.

STN Express V6.0

Coming soon a new version of STN Express with more options for post-processing. Features will include:

- Ability to create reports from STN session
- Ability to create reports from STN session in a table with graphics and text
- Ability to access full text from transcript via the ChemPort connection

The Windows 6.0 version is scheduled for release March 2001.

For more information contact: STN Agency UK; Phone: 01223 432110; Fax: 01223 423429; email: stnhlpuk@rsc.org