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EDITORIAL INFORMATION

The IASSIST Newsletter represents an international cooperative effort on the part of individuals managing, operating, or using machine-readable data archives, data libraries and data services. The Newsletter reports on activities related to the production, acquisition, preservation, processing, distribution, and use of machine-readable data carried out by its members and others in the international social science community. Your contributions and suggestions for topics of interest are encouraged and welcomed. The views set forth by authors of articles contained in this publication are not necessarily those of IASSIST.

Information for Authors

The Newsletter is published four times yearly, as Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. Substantive articles are refereed. Articles and other information should be typewritten and doublespaced. Each page of the manuscript should be numbered. The first page should contain the article title, author's name, affiliation, address to which correspondence should be sent, and telephone number. An author should NOT place his or her name on the manuscript itself. The second page should contain an abstract of 100 to 200 words. Authors are requested to follow the instructions given by the "Publication Manual" of the American Psychological Association. Other material for inclusion in the Newsletter should be completely identified by name, address, and telephone number. If the entry is an announcement of a conference, training session, or the like, the notice should include a mailing address and telephone number for the director of the event, or of the organization sponsoring the event. Book notices and reviews may not exceed two, double-spaced, typewritten pages.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Editor:

Thomas Wm. Madron
Academic Computing and Research Services
245 Grise Hall
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Ky. 42101, USA
Telephone: (502) 745-4981

Book reviews should be submitted in duplicate to the Book Review Editor:

Ms. Kathleen M. Heim
Graduate School of Library Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
329 Main Library
Urbana, IL 61801
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PEACE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Carl Beck

University of Pittsburgh

In a recent article I wrote that "the need for information retrieval systems in the social sciences is both real and apparent, but given the ability of many researchers to gather idiosyncratic research support, the need is not perceived as acute. The evidence that is not perceived as acute is that few scholars are willing to amend their usual behaviors to participate in the building of an effective information base which could be shared by social scientists. With the seeming inability of anyone to stem the information explosion and with few positive steps having been taken recently to improve access, the information environment in which we operate has continued to deteriorate. Unfortunately, that deterioration is still not perceived by most researchers as acute, and the literature is still concerned more with technology and conceptualization than on results.

The impact of a less than adequate information environment is particularly felt by those engaged in a multi-disciplinary study such as peace research. In peace research there are no established authorities and no established and formalized schools of thought, therefore, the peace researcher must engage in a widely ranging information search behavior in order to touch all of the relevant information bases. Peace researchers are also challenged by being in a field which is policy related. Peace research is by its very nature bound to intrude upon national sensitivities, ideological sensitivities, and/or academic sensitivities. If peace researchers are to go beyond the merely polemical in a way that will be attended to by academic and policy colleagues they must be able to document their position effectively. Their ability to be effective is going to depend upon their ability to manipulate a basically uncontrollable information environment. Effective access to information is required if theory buffeted about by information is to be the basis for conclusions reached as a result of peace research.

Unfortunately, we live in an unstructured information environment particularly in the social sciences. It seems beyond anyone's control, even UNESCO's. We are dependent upon information structure to organize and facilitate access to that information environment. Yet every existing information structure provides only partial access for a number of reasons that I will discuss later. There are some important contributions; the work of Alan Newcomb; the work of the International Political Science Association and the work of my own University Center for International Studies in the development of the United States Political Science Information Service are examples. If this report stresses the characteristics of United States Political Science Information Service it is only because I am better acquainted with the ins and outs of that service. But, I believe, that even those who have participated in these activities would recognize the partial nature of their contribution. As more data are collected and discussed the information environment
expands and the ability of an individual researcher to control that environment contracts. Partial access to information has many debilitating consequences. It leads to waste of research resources; it strengthens academic imperialism and orthodoxy; it reinforces tendencies toward the reification of authorities; it even reinforces global divisions such as the North-South division. It also makes it very difficult for new fields of inquiry to develop, or to sustain themselves. I believe that the problem of information access is endemic in the social sciences and particularly acute for persons engaged in peace research.

The remarks in this paper are focused on problems and possibilities for the integration of documentation and information relevant for peace and conflict studies into social sciences information systems and for the use of such systems by peace researchers. There is an additional emphasis upon the delivery of such information to individuals in developing nations, although I tend to believe that the problem confronting scholars in any field that is multi-disciplinary, social scientific and policy related is probably no greater in developing nations than the same problem is in most developed nations -- in fact, it may even be easier at least to initiate fields of inquiry in those nations in that existing educational institutional structures are less formalized.

Much of what I have suggested stems from three positive experiences and from one very strong frustration stemming from other experiences. The positive sets of experience are those associated with the development of the United States Political Science Information System, those associated with my role as Executive Director of the International Studies Association, one of whose thematic sections is a Peace Studies Section; and those associated with my role as Director of the University Center for International Studies, a multi-disciplinary center concerned with internationalizing the teaching, research and service facilities and programs at the University of Pittsburgh. There exists in these cases a symbiotic relationship between information systems and substantive research. We have found that the more effort we put into developing interactive information systems the more effort we will able to devote to the analytical characteristics of research rather than the bibliographic. In doing so we learned a great deal about the conceptual, technical, and organizational problems confronting the development of an information system and the dissemination of information from one such center to another.

The frustrations stem from a decade of committee work in such ill fated activities as the Information Retrieval Committee of the Council of Social Science Data Archives, and other international and national committee's whose efforts here produced many reports, workshop statements, guidelines, but whose contributions to anything operative that improves structured access to information has been very limited. These experiences have reinforced a very strong prejudice which you will see running throughout this paper: to concentrate only on THE Thesaurus, THE information program, THE information retrieval system, and to believe at the same time that this constitutes a direct and positive contribution to improving information access is to engage in an illusion. The illusion is satisfying and, indeed, the development of improved concep-
tualizations and models is important and will shape the future, but we can't risk the present for the future. Since this type of prejudice has, in the past, been described often as American pragmatism I might as well plead guilty to it. However, just for the record it should no longer be considered as American pragmatism as American research support agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the Office of Education, the Ford Foundation, etc., have made it abundantly clear that they believe the operational dimensions of system design and development to be beneath them. Someone has been very successful in persuading them that the "American" concern with getting a system running is not as respectable as the European concern with informatics. I believe we need both; we can deliver the something that works and that meets information needs with very little effort and very little funding. Indeed, I think one could easily document that any investment in information systems would soon be recouped. The often discussed formula is that 25% of a research budget goes into bibliographic searching. My guess is that 25% is too low (Committee on Scientific Technical Information, 1970, 1976a, 1976b).

In a discussion of how to get relevant information into information systems appropriate for peace research we have to begin with some truisms. I will not dwell on the truisms of what constitutes an effective information system. We all know that an information system to be useful and to be used must meet the needs of its users. In the conceptualization and design of an information service the nature of the information to be made available and the nature of the information behaviors of the users to be served must be analyzed or if that is not possible at least inferred from known information structures and known behaviors with space left in the conceptualization and design for unknowns. Therefore, we have to start with the question of what constitutes peace research. David Singer suggests there are three major streams to peace research: (1) the pure science school who justify their research on grounds of intellectual curiosity; (2) the applied science school that believe that their research will end human suffering; and (3) the radical critique school. Singer suggests that three major substantive issues shape the field: strategic deterrence, social reform, and economic development (Singer, 1976).

What are some of the major concepts that mark peace research? If we approach this question by building a narrow profile of peace research and then see what types of terms and concepts as that profile is used to search the United States Political Science Documents, International Political Science Abstracts, and Psychological Abstracts, we get a view of some of the major terms.

1. Agreements, including such items as alliances, contracts, blocs, fronts, state agreements, private agreements, international organizations;

2. Conflict, including such items as aggression, agitation, economic conflict, ideological conflict, social conflict, war;

3. Crisis management, including such items as conflict management,
diplomacy, strategy, bargaining, peace keeping, arms control;

4. Weaponry, including such items as arms, missiles, military characteristics;

5. Structures, including structural prerequisites for world order, peace keeping forces, international law;

6. Peace science, including the search for behavioral and structural predictors of peace, correlates of war, events and even analysis;

7. Psychological conditions, ranging from aggression to consciousness (International Peace Research Newsletter, 7(3)); and

8. Special methodologies, such as fights, games, simulations.

And of course with all of these the array of methodologies, concepts and analytical modes that can be used to discuss them.

Peace researchers as a group will want to be able to search a very wide body of literature, certainly encompassing all of the social sciences and social psychology as well. If we add to that some peace researchers concern with concepts such as consciousness, extracts from the literature of clinical psychology and psychotherapy will probably also be relevant. Additionally researchers will also be concerned with direct policy impacts and they will want to be able to monitor events and specialized transactions as well.

The information environment that is characterized by the aggregated information needs of peace researchers is therefore immense. I believe the size of this environment constitutes the single most difficult problem in developing peace research information systems or in getting peace research information into operating information systems so that peace researchers will use such systems. Before discussing sources as a major item of this paper let us discuss in more traditional fashion some of the parameters of the development of a peace research information system.

1. Terminological control. Information systems vary in the way in which they search textual information from full text searching to some system of terminological control in which both indexers and users are acquainted with a codebook of terms. Weak information systems rest upon a set of descriptors; strong information systems have a structured thesaurus. With testing and refinement the Political Science Thesaurus will meet all of the terminological requirements of peace research information systems in English. Such testing is now underway at the University Center for International Studies. A revised thesaurus, along with appropriate changes in the computer files, will be available sometime in 1980.

The limitation is that this Thesaurus is only in English and our conceptu-
alizations of language and linguistic structure are not developed enough to allow for direct translation from a Thesaurus in one language to another. However, even with the sloppiness that will be built into direct translation we ought to be experimenting with it by running a translated Thesaurus against existing information databases. The fact that most computer readable information services are in English, and even more limiting, drawn from English language sources, limits the possibility of building peace research from many different perspectives and traditions (Sartori, et al., 1975).

2. Levels of Information. The design of an information system or the design of a format for machine readable descriptions of textual information always involves trade-offs. I believe that one area that we cannot allow to be weak and partial is in the number of levels of information that should be included. These include a document number, author, contributors, title, source, abstract, tables, figures and charts, cited authors, subject descriptor (developed from the Thesaurus), geographic descriptors (developed from the Thesaurus), and significant proper names.

I wish that we had added one more, headings in the article, and I wish that we had included the title of the citation as well as the author. However, since we have been operating on no funds except the subsidy that the University of Pittsburgh is providing to cover our deficit, it is perhaps astonishing that we have come as far as we have. We made the strong levels of information decision in the belief that by so doing no one would ever have to go back to these documentary representations of scholarly articles to add information, no matter who the clients might be for the information service. I believe we were right. We were also right in not allowing authors to write their own abstracts. Our experience shows that authors tend to abstract the article they wish they had written rather than the article they wrote.

3. Information Retrieval System. Since the computer became a tool of social research, millions of hours have been spent discussing and designing information retrieval systems in the hope that THE system could be established. I used the term "strong" to describe at least one systems approach to the levels of information problem in information systems. I would use the term "strong" in regards to information retrieval systems when those sys-
tems are easily understood, easily manipulated and fully flexible. Its internal nature should be left to those who have to mesh hardware and software requirements. RECON is still an excellent model. So are DIALOG (Lockheed), ORBIT (SDC), STAIRS (BRS), WISE (a New York Consortium), TRIAL (Northwestern University), AND PIRETS (University of Pittsburgh). The design of such systems and changing of the necessary programs is now a matter of routine. The swapping of data and information bases is much more important a process in getting information to be used than is the swapping of programs. We have run USPSD tapes on DIALOG, on ORBIT, on TRIAL, and on PIRETS, and on homegrown programs for small IBM computers, large CDC computers, etc. We are always glad to discuss with any institute interested in swapping information bases, mutual participation in the design and implementation of a retrieval system for access to the swapped materials.

4. Dissemination. What do we know about the format requirements of users of a computer-readable information system? Actually, we do not know very much. We feel that users do not like to read computer output. I know I do not. We feel that some scholars want tradi-

tionally structured information and that other scholars want information sources that they can manipulate. A strong information system will then produce multiple products. A weak one will produce its product in only one or two formats. In USPSIS we produce the following: an annual publication of the entire contents of the yearly file; a set of derivative publications in which certain documents which clusters around a theme are pulled from the file and printed on an annual basis (Ethnic Studies, Strategic Studies, Intercultural Studies, Russian and East European Studies, Asian Studies, and if we could expand our sources -- see below -- peace research); individualized searches in which clients may write or call and discuss their information needs from which we will generate a custom designed profile and run it against all of our holdings (currently about 600,000 entries); tape leasing in which an institute may lease the tapes receiving a new one each quarter; tape leasing to commercial systems which we do through both Lockheed and SDC, and soon may be even microfiche and microfilm. All of these outputs seem easy to generate. What is not easy is to know which will please clients.
5. Sources. Here is the weakness of all existing answers to the question of how can we help peace researchers meet their information needs. Even the literature of the United States, which is the best covered, is badly covered. We can demonstrate this by asking what sets of sources are potentially of interest of peace researchers and how much of a particular set can they access on a sustained basis. Please note that I have raised the question, not in terms of articles in specific journals or specific occasional paper series because I believe it is wasteful and inefficient in terms of financing and in terms of meeting the needs of the diverse clientele which constitute peace research to select journals for inclusion in a peace research system. The computer should do the selection: one person's peace and conflict studies literature may not be another's. In the interest of helping researchers we should be able to tell them what materials are covered by an information system. If article are the level of inclusion in a system the client will never really know whether or not a journal has been fully covered by his or her search. When a decision is made to include a journal in a system all articles in that journal should be included so that a user of the system does not have a fret about full coverage and so that later another abstractor/indexer does not have to go back and fill in holes. Also data/information files can be more easily swapped than networks created. It should be noted that I am using a low level concept such as swapping rather than a higher level concept such as networking because I believe that swapping is possible now and that networking requires both organizational and technological development to be efficient. It doesn't require much but swapping, as I discussed in the conclusion of this paper, can be done today.

a) Journals: It is a safe statement that through Sociological Abstracts, Psychological Abstracts, United States Political Science Documents, the journal literature published in the U.S. relevant to peace research is handled and handled well. Clients who wish to search this literature can do so in published format, machine manipulable format, and in some cases tapes can be purchased or exchanged. Through the work of Alan Newcomb and International Political Science Abstracts some of the international literature can also be searched. The English abstracts of
International Political Science Abstracts can be searched by computer through the United States Political Science Information Service. The most effective organizational arrangement for improving the coverage of journal literature is by the development of national or regional equivalents to the work of any of the above. Certainly, this is the stated goal of at least one of the above information services and discussions are now under way with a number of institutions on how to bring this objective to fruition.

b) Books. It is a fair statement that no existing service adequately handles access to books for peace researchers. In the future when the Journal of Economic Literature goes into a computer based information system some progress will have been made. A major issue with this is how to describe the contents of a book adequately to help the client determine whether a study is relevant to the client's needs. Those of us who believe in strong information services argue that books should be analyzed on a chapter basis in a format as journal articles. Unfortunately, at this moment no one provides the resources even to do the experimentation necessary to determine whether the cost is worth the effort. Experiments on how to describe books for the purpose of inclusion in machine readable information systems are critically important. Perhaps the Journal of Economic Literature's approach of a critical descriptive review is adequate. One service will be exploring soon the possibility of some subvention from book publishers for inclusion of their products in the service.

c) Convention papers. Given the expansive nature of peace research interests, the lack of definition of the field, and given the wide range of authorities -- particularly of informational authorities -- the life of information in peace research is very short. Much of the information exists in ephemera or in fugitive files. Three major examples of this type of information are convention papers, peace research conference proceedings, and occasional or working papers. ERIC is about the only
system that handles convention papers and even there it does not do it particularly well. Most associations no longer even list convention papers. The only one that I know that does so on a continuous basis and makes them available for purchase after the convention is the International Studies Association. Yet convention papers are not hard to organize. Often they can be grouped around a panel which makes the collection of such papers relatively easy. A hopeful sign is the work being done at the Carleton School of International Affairs under the leadership of Jane Baumont. She is collecting the titles of convention papers, computerizing them and doing searches using Key World in Context (KWIC) procedures. It is at least a start.

d) Conference proceedings. In Vol XVII, No. 3 of the International Peace Research Newsletter, fifteen conferences important to peace research are listed. This seems rather typical. However, it will be interesting to see how many of the conference papers ever become part of the information environment which we can access. These materials, I believe, are of particular interest to a peace researcher because of the nature of the field as discussed above.

e) Occasional papers and working papers. At times some of us have argued that publication is a symbolic act. By the time an article is published it may be known throughout the invisible college network by those who have their antenna out regarding the work of the author. A media of information that is important to the peace researcher is working papers of institutions. Many institutions have working paper series. John Fletcher has shown what can be done in regards to letting the world know about Economic Working Papers. This fall, Economic Working Papers will begin computerization and may be available through commercial information systems. Unfortunately, Economic Working Papers contains neither abstracts nor a structured terminological control system but Mr. Fletcher is building a terminological control system inductively. His efforts deserve support.

f) Research Directory including research in
TECHNOLOGICAL FORECASTING AND SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION SERVICES

As ever greater demands are placed on various resources, government, industry, and education around the world are attempting to better understand future technological developments so that better and more coherent planning can take place. As with other elements of technological societies, those people engaged in the delivery of information services must have some idea of the future in order to meet demands placed upon them by the end user. One of the problems with the delivery of such services is that we meet both technological and conceptual problems.

The technological problems are bound up in developments of computer and communications devices, while the conceptual problems relate to the issue of what data shall be saved and archived. Although the need for forecasting is evident, the techniques for proceeding with such forecasts is not at all apparent. One of the primary methods used to forecast and assess developments in technology is the Delphi Method. Delphi is useful under conditions where hard trend-line data are not available or where typical trend models are thought to lack descriptive power for future developments.

In order to assess future needs and problems concerning the delivery of machine readable information, with this issue we are beginning a Delphi Study of the future developments in information technology and service. The first questionnaire appears in the current issue of the IASSIST Newsletter while a second questionnaire will appear in the Summer issue. A report of the findings will be presented in the Fall issue.

The Delphi Method is designed to elicit from a group of experts -- in this case members of IASSIST -- informed opinions regarding the future. It does this by first seeking from the experts suggestions about what developments (problems, events, techniques, equipment) will develop. The time frame you should consider is the period from 1980 through 2000. The first questionnaire to be presented is, therefore, essentially a blank sheet of paper.

Using all the imagination and information at your disposal we would like you to make some suggestions about what events and/or problems you believe will confront the delivery of information services over the next twenty years. From these open-ended responses will be developed a set of items which will be presented in the second questionnaire -- you will then be asked to rate each of the items in terms of the likelihood that an event will take place, an estimated date by which the event will take place, and the desirability that the event take place. From the set of responses to the second questionnaire an analysis will be developed which will present the findings of the study.
IASSIST Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1979)

We are embarking on this study in an effort to further involve the members of IASSIST in developing goals and objectives for the future of information services and technology. In this insert space is provided for your responses. When you have completed as much of the questionnaire as possible, please return it to:

Thomas Wm. Madron
Academic Computing and Research Services
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101 USA

If you live outside the United States, please return the questionnaire by Air Mail.

PLEASE NOTE

In order to prepare the second questionnaire we need as much time as possible. It is imperative that you complete and return your questionnaire as quickly as possible. We will structure the second questionnaire using those responses received by May 15, 1979. Your help and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This is an opportunity to provide all of us with some information which should be useful in planning at our home institutions as well as for IASSIST. Thanks.

WITH RESPECT TO EACH CATEGORY NOTED BELOW, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: "What conditions will be facing those of us who deliver information services in the 1980s and 1990s?" Provide as many responses as you believe desirable in the form of short, declarative sentences.

PROBLEMS FOR INFORMATION SERVICES:

1. __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________

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3. __________________________________________________________

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4. __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

USER DEMANDS ON INFORMATION SERVICES:
NEW TECHNIQUES FOR DELIVERING INFORMATION SERVICES

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

EQUIPMENT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

1. 

INSERT - 3
OTHER EVENTS OR CONDITIONS:
1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION
progress. Peace researchers need to know who is doing what in the field and what research is being undertaken. Directories of research in progress and biographical directories are important information bases for peace researchers. Newsletters such as International Peace Research contains invaluable information on who is doing what and what institutes are producing. But a more systematic and more easily updated system is required.

g) Policy Documents. Aside from the New York Times Information Bank what is there? Yet peace researchers need to know about transactions, public affairs, pronouncements by individual political actors. A model for this type of policy related information system in SCORPIO at the U.S. Library of Congress, but SCORPIO is not public and until it is it is of little use to peace researchers.

h) Specific Data Sets. In Vol. XVII. No. 3 of the International Peace Newsletter it is suggested that peace researchers should pay attention to such critical matters as food production. Yet how do we find data that we can manipulate for

analytic purposes on food production? What is needed is an information system on data files available for secondary analysis. The characteristics of such a system are discussed by Paul E. Peters in SIGSOC Bulletin, Vol 6, No. 2-3, in 1974. Experimental work on developing such files was done by the University Center for International Studies as early as 1970. However, despite many international conferences on this subject, there is no service available.

6. Swapping and Networking. The information environment of the peace researcher is immense and continuously growing probably at an expanding rate. The structure for accessing the environment in a continuous controlled manner are inadequate. What can be done to improve this situation? There is always room for improvement in both the technology and terminology dimensions of an information service, but the major impediment is neither conceptual nor technical, it is organizational. We have had our sights set on THE system rather than on facilitating system interchange. If through inter-institutional agreements research institutes would sector out the information environment and take on res-
ponsibility for building machine-readable files of a sector with agreed upon standards on delivery time, on levels of information, and on terminological control, and then on conditions for swapping, swapping of files could become routine rather than the unusual. USPSIS would be glad, as I am sure many research institutes or services would be glad, to swap files, UNESCO could be of great assistance by providing seed money and organizational backing for such swaps. This many modal model would come closer to satisfying the needs of peace researchers than any one publication, or any one tape, or any one service. As the swaps became networks an infra-structure for peace researchers would develop, and perhaps even a demonstration model for international collaboration could emerge.

REFERENCES


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NEWS AND NOTES

IASSIST NEWS

From the Seat of My Pants

Notes from the President

During the last three decades, social science quantitative research and applications problems have focused on substantive and methodological problems inherent in the various disciplines. More recently, these problems have focused on data base, software, and computer requirements. With few exceptions, limited attention has been paid to preservation, maintenance, and dissemination structures and mechanisms required to help solve scientific and technical information problems.

In the last few years, however, it appears from reports of our colleagues around the world, that national governments are taking steps to recognize information as a national resource and to assume the obligation to preserve, manage, and safeguard information as it would any important national resource.

Examples of national activities include recent developments in Denmark, during 1978, when the Danish Data Archives assumed permanent institutional status (Nielsen, 1979); Norway, in 1977, when he Norwegian Social Science Data Services was given permanent status as an organ under the Research Council (Rokkan, 1978); and the United States, in 1977-78, when the National Science Foundation made a large commitment to the University of Michigan Center for Political Studies, to support the continued collection and accessioning of the American National Election Studies as a national resource; and also provided funds to the University of Wisconsin Center for Demography and Ecology, to create public use files for the 1940 and 1950 U.S. Censuses of Population. The American Society of Information Science has begun to manifest interest in developing a corps of trained professionals in areas related to numeric data. UNESCO, through its standing committee on social science information, now has a mechanism for articulating social scientific (quantitative) information needs. The Federation Internationale de Documentation (FID) has established a committee on "Social Science Documentation," whose activities will include participation in the activities of international and nongovernmental international organizations dealing with problems of the social sciences, with particular regard to information use (Riggs, ed. 1978a). The Second Conference on Information and Documentation, sponsored by the European Cooperation for Social Science Information and Documentation (ECSSID) (Moscow, June 1978), authorized its Working Group No. 3 to work in the problems areas of hardware, software, and information technology problems; and standardization of input data processing and information exchange, with a view toward finding ways to enhance international cooperation (Riggs, ed. 1978b). Surely other examples are available which are grounds for optimism for those of us concerned with the development of data preservation and delivery structures and mechanisms (including networks, and support services), to provide a means to interate numeric data in coherent national and international
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II

While the social scientific research community and governmental policymakers can meet some of their data needs in a timely and efficient manner, more and more, the complex research and policy problems require substantial investments of resources by individual researchers and information management specialists to locate, obtain, prepare, and retrieve data products. The need for resources sharing of increasingly scarce resources and for coordination of activities by research communities and public policymakers is beginning to manifest itself in public reassessments of existing structures and mechanisms for information management and use.

The increased data requirements of the researcher and policymaker are occurring at a period of accelerated technological changes, exponential increase in the volume and diversity of information, and number and diversity of organizations and technologies that process information. It therefore becomes critical that analytical tools and methodologies be developed to understand the requirements of present and future scientific and technical information communities and that cohesive and integrated data and information delivery systems are created for furthering access to information and for ensuring the widest possible utilization of this resource.

III

These thoughts bring me to what I see is IASSIST's as yet untapped potential, its membership, whose knowledge, experiences, and commitment are to assisting the development of an international information system which includes numeric data and their related aspects. The wealth of untapped expertise exists in the areas of data base construction, bibliographic control, archives and library development and management, documentation description, statistical file handling and management, software development and use, standardization of data for international transfer, secondary analysis, statistics, programming, and the like. What has generally gone unrecognized is how all this expertise "fits in" with social scientific quantitative research and applications problems. What IASSIST can and will be doing in the next few years is sharing this expertise with the library and information science professions, scientists and policymakers, and others, through a vigorous effort to articulate these problems through this Newsletter and other publications and by participation in the many organizations which share its membership concern.

The success of this effort depends on activism, intellectual activism of the membership and Administrative Committee. I look forward to participating in this effort. I look forward to seeing this Newsletter being cited as an authoritative source for the problems to which I have alluded above. I look upon my comments in the quarterly issues as a means to stimulate discussion of current issues and to offer a sounding board for problems as I see them. Readers' rebuttals, additional information, and corrections to my perhaps flights-of-fancy will be welcomed and solicited. This Newsletter serves to communicate information on what is happening around the
world, to keep us informed, and in touch. Use it!

Alice Robbin

REFERENCES


1979 North American IASSIST Conference

Program

Plenary sessions: The first plenary session will focus on the "Role of IASSIST Vis-a-vis International Associations". The "alphabet soup" of international associations and organizations in the social sciences and information sciences will be examined - IASSIST, IFDO, FID, IFLA, UNESCO, ECSSID and others.

The second plenary session is the wrap-up session for the conference and the business meeting of IASSIST.

Panels: Five panels have been scheduled to facilitate the presentation of formal papers and points of view from a number of countries. There will be time for audience reaction and participation. The topics of the panels are: International Co-operation for Acquisition and Disposal of Machine-Readable Data Files; Merging Multi-National Survey Data; Interactive Software Packages; Confidentiality in Collection, Storage, and Dissemination of Data; and Needs of Data Users.

Seminars: Three seminars have been organized, one of "Public Use Files", one on "Education and Training for Data Archivists", and a tutorial on "Data Structures".

Action Groups: The five Action Groups which will meet during the conference are: Classification, Data Documentation, Processed-produced Data, Data Archive Registry, and Data Organization and Management. On the first day of the conference, these Action Groups will meet informally to bring everyone up-to-date on the activities of the Group. Some of the Action Groups have scheduled formal sessions for the following day. An afternoon has been reserved for working on Action Group projects. All conference delegates are invited to participate in the work of the Action Groups.

Discussions: For the first time, IASSIST has scheduled informal "night flight" discussions, one on the "Acquisition of Government Data Files: Public or Private Sector" and one on "Teaching Packages for Data File Use". These are unstructured discussions designed to examine the interest or concerns of IASSIST members on a particular topic.
Social Activities: The Hospitality Suite will be open every night. A cocktail party and banquet are scheduled.

Other Activities

Sites of professional interest to the conference delegates include: Public Archives of Canada, National Library of Canada, Statistics Canada, Data Clearing House for the Social Sciences, City of Ottawa Archives, and Carleton University Social Science Data Archive. Visits will be arranged on request.

The joggers and outdoor enthusiasts will appreciate the fact that the Skyline Hotel is only a few minutes from the scenic Ottawa River Parkway – ideal for jogging, bicycling, or walking. The hotel has an indoor swimming pool, sauna, and squash courts.

Ottawa, the capital of Canada is the home of several national museums, art galleries, and cultural centres, as well as buildings of historic interest.

Money

The American dollar is worth 15-20% more than the Canadian dollar. American money is acceptable anywhere in the city but the banks give the best exchange rates. Most of the banks are open Monday-Thursday, 1000-1500, Friday 1000-1800.

Weather

The average temperature in May is 14 C or 55 F. This past winter has been mild. There have been reported sightings of GREEN GRASS already this year in the first week of March. We are optimistic that May will be pleasant – but do bring your rain gear just in case!

Further Information

For additional information on the conference, please contact:

IASSIST CONFERENCE 1979
Box 3291, Station "C"
Ottawa, Canada
K1Y 4J5
Telephone: 613-563-3570
613-997-3080

Preliminary Schedule

May 6
1900 – 2300
Registration; Hospitality Suite May 7
800 – 900
Registration
900 – 1200
Plenary Session I: IASSIST's Role Vis-a-Vis International Associations 1200 – 1330
Lunch 1330 – 1630
Simultaneous Panels:

1. International Co-operation for Acquisition and Disposal of Machine-Readable Data files

2. Merging Multi-National Survey Data

1630 – 1730

Action Groups
1730 - 2000
Cocktail Party
2100 - 2230
May 8
900 - 1200
Simultaneous Sessions:

1. Seminar on Data Structures
2. Inter-active Software Packages

1200 - 1330
Lunch
1330 - 1630
Simultaneous Sessions:

1. Confidentiality in Collection, Storage, and Dissemination of Data
2. Needs of Data Users

1630 - 1800
Night Flight Discussion: Teaching Packages for Data File Use

May 9
900 - 1200
Simultaneous Sessions:

1. Seminar on Public Use Files: Past, Present and Future
2. Education and Training for Data Archivists

1200 - 1330
Lunch
1330-1630
Simultaneous Sessions:

1. Seminar on Public Use Files (continued)
2. Action Groups

1830 - 2100
Banquet
May 10
900 - 1200
Plenary Session II

Administrative Committee Election

As the membership has been informed by separate mailing, a new President and Administrative Committee has been elected. The new members of the Administrative Committee (formerly the Steering Committee) and their addresses are listed on the inside back cover of this issue of the NEWSLETTER. The election of the President is a function of the Administrative Committee and Alice Robbin (University of Wisconsin) was elected for the 1979-80 term.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

USSR - USA Working Group on Social Science Information

A Soviet-American symposium on information and documentation problems in the social sciences was held in Moscow on March 5-7, 1979. The American delegation was headed by Jerome Clubb, director of ICPSR and included Henriette D. Avram, Library of Congress; Tom McKechnie, University of Pittsburgh; Margaret Child, National Endowment for the Humanities; Douglas Ferguson, Stanford University; Fred Riggs, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Judith Rowe, Princeton University; Hans Rutiman, Modern Language Association; Merrill Shanks, University of California-Berkeley. The Russian delegation was headed by V. A. Vinogradov, director of the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences (INION) of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and included leading specialists from that organization. Meetings were also held with members of the Institutes of World Economics and International Relations and of the United States and Canada.
As a result of the symposium a proposal to establish a permanent subcommission will be submitted to the biannual meeting of the Commission on the Social Sciences and Humanities of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Among the subjects proposed for exploration by the subcommission are:

1. Specific problems in and the methods for creating records describing secondary documents in information systems in the humanities and the social sciences.

2. Study of terminological comparison on social science problems with the aim of perfection of linguistic adequacy of information.

3. Development of relations between information centers and users of information (e.g., problem of users' education, methods of exchanging data between centers, selective dissemination of information).

4. Optimization of facilities and methods of collection, acquisition, reproduction and dissemination of information, including original research materials.

Possible areas of cooperation include:

1. Organization of colloquia and working meetings on the whole complex of the above-mentioned problems or on specific problems.

2. Exchange of experts in the field of information organization in the social sciences and the humanities.

3. Creation of a working group to compile a bilingual glossary of principal social science terms used in both countries.

4. Preparation of joint publications concerned with various aspects of information processing in the humanities and social sciences.

5. Development of scientific literature exchanges on social sciences among scientific libraries and information centers in hardcopy-, micro- and/or machine-readable-form.

Danish Data Archives

As may have come to your attention, the last couple of years have seen prolonged negotiations concerning the future of the DDA. Now, having acquired a status of comparable permanency, we are pleased to be able to send you a short paper (M-1196, forthcoming in the ECPR News Circular) outlining the history of DDA, the pilot project, and the new situation of DDA: a university institute with national coverage. Hopefully, this paper will help dissolve any doubts as to "whatever became of the DDA"; and we will be glad to supply any additional information that may be required.

The changes in geographical and institutional situation, and the ensuing establishment of a new "infra- and superstructure" have
naturally been given priority during the transitional period. Indeed, for the last six months these pursuits, along with the servicing of the Danish user community, have swallowed staff time to an extent that has left only a minimal amount of resources for our international communication.

As spring approaches, however, we seem to be emerging into the clear once again, and with most of the restart problems behind us we are now looking forward to continued and fruitful international cooperation for the benefit of the social science information and documentation services.

Per Nielsen
Archive Director
OBJECTIVES

Encourage and support the establishment at local and national levels of information centers for data base reference, maintenance, and dissemination

Foster international dissemination and exchange of information on significant developments in information centers for statistical and textual machine-readable data bases

Coordinate on an international level programs, projects, and general procedural efforts which provide an international forum for the discussion of problems relating to information centers

Promote the development of professional standards and encourage the establishment of training for data center personnel

ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Members participate in Action Groups organized to address problems in the following areas: Data Archive Registry, Data Archive Development, Data Acquisition, Data Documentation, Classification, Process-Produced Data, and Data Organization and Management

The Action Group activities include development of a registry of data libraries, archives, and information services; writing of a guide to providing social science data services for research, policy and planning purposes; development of standards for data acquisition, documentation of sample survey and process-produced data, bibliographic control and citation of social science machine-readable data, and the relationship of study design to data management; and, creating a directory of catalogues which list machine-readable data files

Other activities include regional and international workshops, conferences, seminars and training sessions.

PUBLICATIONS

IASSIST Newsletter - A quarterly publication on activities relating to the production, acquisition, preservation, processing, distribution, and utilization of machine-readable data in the international social science community

IASSIST Conference Proceedings

MEMBER BENEFITS

IASSIST Newsletter

S.S. Data, A Newsletter of Social Science Archival Acquisitions (a quarterly publication from the University of Iowa, describing social science data acquisitions around the world)

Special rates on other IASSIST publications

(See other side to indicate Action Group)
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

President
Alice Robbin, Data and Program Library Service, University of Wisconsin, 4452 Social Science Building, Madison, Wisconsin 53706 USA.

Regional Secretaries

ASIA: Naresh Nijhawan, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Data Archive, 35 Fer-ozshah Road, New Delhi, -11001, India.

CANADA: Sharon Chapple Henry, Data Clearing House for the Social Sciences, 151 Slater, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5N1 Canada.

EAST EUROPE: Krsysztof Ostrowski, Komitet Nauk Politycznych, PAN, Sekcja Przetwarzania i Archiwizacji Danych skrytka pocztowa 12, 00-955 Warszawa, Poland.

WEST EUROPE: Cees Middendorp, Steinmetzarchief, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam-C., Netherlands.

UNITED STATES: Judith Rowe, Computer Center, Princeton University, 87 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA.

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Patrick Bova, National Opinion Research Center, 6030 S. Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637 USA.

Nancy Carmichael, Social Science Research Council, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036 USA.

John DeVries, Dept. of Sociology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6 Canada.

Sue Dodd, Social Science Data Library, Manning Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 USA.

Carolyn Geda, ICPSR, P. O. Box 1248, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 USA.

Pierre Lacasse, Centre de Recherche en Amenagement, Regional Universite de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec K1K 2B1 Canada.

Guido Martinotti, Archivio dati e programmi per le scienze sociali, via G. Cantoni 4, 20144 Milan, Italy.

Harold Naugler, Machine Readable Archives, Public Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4 Canada.

Per Nielsen, Dansk Data Arkiv, H. C. Andersens Boulevard 38 mezz., DK-1553 Kovenhavn V., Denmark.

TREASURER: Ed Hanis, Social Science Computing Laboratory, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada.

EDITOR: Thomas Wm. Madron, Academic Computing and Research Services, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101 USA.