
COMPUTER SOFTWARE REVIEWS

CD-ROM Containing Chemical Innovations Series—Cosmetics from Derwent Direct, England¹

Colin H. L. Kennard

Department of Chemistry, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Q 4072, Australia

Received February 3, 1994

Once upon a time it was necessary to physically go into a library to search for patents and scan Chemical Abstracts or its equivalent noting references for further review. This was replaced by the STN International Data Base system where, for the cost of an international call (using Wide World Web, this cost has been reduced) and other STN fees, a systematic computer search could be made of many up-to-date bases such as for patents: CA (Chemical Abstracts); IFI/Plenum—US patents; INPADOC/European patent office; PAT/German patent office/Wila Verlag; WPIDS/Derwent—world patents, and for cosmetics, IPA/American Society of Hospital Pharmacists. Although these systems are right up-to-date, they are costly and relatively user unfriendly. In the days of multimedia, they are being supplemented by CD-ROMs which have a date mark. Derwent produces a whole range of these CD-ROMs taken from their World Patent Index. The one selected for review comes from their Chemical Innovations Series (sic Patents) on Cosmetics from January 92 to January 94. Because this only takes up about one-tenth of the capacity of the CD-ROM, it is a shame that they could not have gone back further in time. The setting up program is on the plastic platter (a good idea), so that installation works without any problems. The database is searched using Dataware's CD-Answer software. However, this reviewer has problems with nonstandard icons. There should be some statement when highlighting any icon. There are two ways to search, one using search terms such as Title, Abstract, Text, Accession No., Patent Assignee, Patent No., Designated States, Language, Inventor, Publication Dates, Application details, Derwent class, and IPC. Boolean

operators could function, but the manual (page 9) on searching for more than one field at a time was complicated. The outline given on page 9 becomes "soap and gb" execution. The Boolean NOT is replaced by WITHOUT. Browse search is also available. Both text and drawings (clicking on the camera icon) are displayed and may be printed. The information isolated from the CD-ROM may then be exported in many different formats such as WORD-STAR, ASCII, comma delimited, D-base III, Lotus, DIF, Fixed Field. The MS-DOS version of the search program was also available on the CD-ROM. A typing error: Page 13 refers to the sort comment which is in the File menu. Actually in my copy it was in the View menu. The problem with all these systems is that technology is changing rapidly. Some of the old data bases are now available on the electronic super highway (Netscape—MOSAIC) either free or with a charge. These are up-to-date but depend on proper communications. The CD-ROM gives independence from communications at the cost of being dated. There are some interesting statistics in the data. Australia had 42 patents, while other entries were Japan, 4665; United States, 1197; World, 1191; Soviet Union, 338; and Great Britain, 167.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) The Derwent CD-ROM for Cosmetics is available from Derwent Direct, 1921 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1821D, Arlington, VA 22202. Phone: 703-413-5050, FAX: 703-413-0127. The CD-ROM has a yearly price of either \$1495 (yearly with monthly updates) or \$795 (yearly with quarterly updates).

CI9503467