from 11 major academic societies concerned with chemistry for cooperation at least in chemical information. JAICI plans to publish an abstract journal containing author abstracts printed in the journals published by these 11 academic societies, with Hideaki Chihara of the Chemical Abstractors' Association of Japan as the editor, because the *Complete Chemical Abstracts of Japan,* which has been abstracting all of the Japanese chemical information in Japan since 1877 with good coverage, has a very long lag period in the publication of abstracts. The new abstract journal hopes to extend its coverage to other journals when its publication starts. By so doing, abstracting of papers in minor journals will improve, and these abstracts can be offered to CA for publication more comprehensively and rapidly.

There is, of course, JICST which deals with information in science and technology in general. This organization was set up in 1957 and its part in chemical information includes the publication of the *Complete Chemical Abstracts of Japan* (monthly, circulation 1750) and *Current Bibliography on Science and Technology, Chem. and Chem. Ind. Section* (published every 10 days, circulation 2150). The latter contains abstracts of foreign literature, about 100,000 abstracts per year, and the length of each abstract is about one-half that of CA. Although the publication of each abstract is slightly later than that in CA, foreign literature is abstracted in the Japanese language, and the journal is utilized, especially in the industry.

The Japanese Patent Law was revised in 1971, and all the patent applications will be publicly disclosed *in toto* 18 months after the date of filing. Patent applications for which an examination has been demanded (expected to cover about one-third of the total applications) will be examined by the Patent Office, and be patented after about 2 years on the average. A Patent Information Center was established in 1972, and the Center is now preparing to set up retrieval of patent information.

The Japanese government considered the idea of setting up the National Information System for Science and Technology (NIST) in 1970 for effective flow of scientific and technical information, but nothing definite can be said about it at the present stage.

Introduction. Comparative Evaluations of Existing Chemical Information Services Critique Symposium*

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Several years ago, the Division of Chemical Literature initiated a critique symposium in which speakers were invited to examine and evaluate available information systems and services, and report how effectively these services met the needs of their particular user community. This type of symposium entailed a broad characterization of the various information services and an objective evaluation of each service in terms of its advantages and disadvantages. However, very few, if any, chemical information systems can survive many years without changes concomitant with the evolving nature of chemistry. And indeed, the last few years have seen the increasing growth of chemistry in new directions. This growth has been reflected in the number of computer-based information services available to the chemist. Also, during this period, we noticed the advent of large information processors, who as "middle men" attractively packaged and provided a comprehensive variety of information services. Therefore, these newer events prompted the revival of this critique symposium to update our thinking as to the relevant factors affecting the dissemination of chemical information.

The broad objectives of our symposium were: (1) to determine the value and acceptability of existing chemical information services to chemists; (2) to determine how effective these information services met the needs of the users; (3) to ascertain what effect, if any, does the operating environment of the ultimate user have on the usefulness of these services—i.e., Federal, State, academic, industrial or commercial service centers; (4) to determine what degree of overlap can be tolerated from one service to another with regard to journal coverage, timeliness, etc., and (5) to determine, if possible, what differentiates chemical information handling from other scientific and technical information handling.

In examining the merits of this continuing critique symposium, Herman Skolnik[1] asked "How and in what way are we reacting to new tools, especially computers, and to newer services which are based upon computerized system?" He further asks the question "Are we satisfied that these new services are responding to the needs of those we serve----." The answers, in part, lie in the four succeeding papers which were delivered before the Division of Chemical Literature in April 1972.

The papers have been organized to cover both the information processor's and ultimate user's evaluation of various commercially available information services. We have attempted to bring out the advantages and disadvantages, value and cost, as well as various modifications to existing services that were made by individual information organizations to best serve their user community. The experiences thus related have touched upon many factors on how certain chemical information systems have performed in different subject areas and for different types of questions. We have tried to evaluate and discuss what deficiencies were encountered and how they might be overcome. Our sincere hope is that the producers of chemical information, the processors of chemical information, and the ultimate users of chemical information will benefit from these experiences.

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LITERATURE CITED

(1) Skolnik, Herman, Editorial, *J. Chem. Doc.*, 11, No. 4, 194 (1971).