Symposium on Functions and Contributions of the Industrial Information Center*

Introductory Remarks

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The symposium papers which follow were originally conceived of as presenting a picture of some developments in industrial information centers, ushering in the seventies. The symposium was held jointly by the Divisions of Chemical Literature and Industrial and Engineering Chemistry and was designed to educate members of both divisions in newer advances in processing of chemical information and to allow the members of the two divisions to interact.

The papers chosen for presentation were representative of the work done in the industrial information center, but they are by no means a complete catalog of the functions of such a center. These start, as has often been said, with in-depth reference or literature searching, but apply modern techniques to range over a wide spectrum of services including technical processing, microform storage, files consultation, indexing, abstracting, translating, report editing, information acquisition, current awareness and selective dissemination of information, continuing education, raw data handling, and storage and retrieval of information in all its various forms including correspondence and trade materials as well as traditional reports and books.

The first paper deals with the application of newer media at Olin Corporation, New Haven, Connecticut, and illustrates how modern technology, exclusive of the computer, can contribute to solving the user's need for instant information. This is followed by a review from Abbott Laboratories in North Chicago, Illinois, of trends in the use of internal and external abstracting services. The third paper, from Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Michigan, describes a computer approach to current awareness from primarily external literature and the final paper in the group, from Squibb Corporation, New Brunswick, New Jersey, details a method of combination of computer technology with internal and external indexed information to meet the reference needs of the user. In each of the presentations, quantitative data are included, data which have been sorely missed in past literature.

At the symposium, the formal papers were followed by two informal, personal case studies dealing with laboratory personnel use of information. These were based on the following nine questions:

1. What single tool do you use in searching the literature more than any other?
2. Where and how do you draw the line between your own literature searching and literature searching for you by an information person?
3. Are any of the current awareness services useful to you (such as *Chemical Titles, Current Contents*, etc.)?
4. Which of the following information services do you find particularly useful? Chemical Abstracts Services, Institute for Scientific Information, Derwent Services, Clearinghouse for Scientific and Technical Information, Defense Documentation Center, Biosciences Information Services, American Institute of Physics, Engineering Societies, American Mathematical Society, Beilstein, and National Library of Medicine.
5. What service do you feel would be most useful to you, if available?
6. Where do you feel government money should be placed to best serve the interests of the information user?
7. What do you think about the extension of the concepts of national libraries and national information centers?
8. Where did you learn your abilities as a literature information user—in school or in your work experience?
9. Should a course in scientific literature be required of students in chemistry?

One of the case studies, prepared by a research chemist at Abbott Laboratories, is included as the fifth paper in the group.

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