

CD-ROM Containing British Pharmacopoeia and British Pharmacopoeia (Veterinary) from HMSO Electronic Publishing, England¹

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Received February 3, 1995

According to the user manual that is included in the video type pack of British Pharmacopoeia "the main virtue of the CD-ROM is the key that it provides to unlock data within the Pharmacopoeia. Which materials still contain a text for pyrogens? Which tablet documents require dissolution tests? Which assay procedures call for the use of liquid chromatography?" It is this ability to quickly search for major reference material that makes it attractive to any chemical laboratory involved in drugs. It is planned to issue a new disc each year following the publication of that year's annual addendum. At 151 MByte the CD-ROM is only 25% full. Installation of the system was not easy. The package comes with two 3.5" floppy disks. No real problem with the A: drive if it can take a 3.5" disk, but in the local case, the B: drive is the 3.5" one. After a bit of trouble, the system was installed. RPW.EXE was on both disks, and the program made a comment about duplicate files. When the system was run, there was an application error due to program KRNL386.EXE. For some unknown reason it worked with the 10/Mar/92 vintage and not with the newer 11/Nov/93. The physical manual lacks any figure for the windows display. In the supplied version there is a collection of many OK buttons. The first on the left must refer to search, none

for the second, AND, OR, NOT, XOR, AND[], NOT[], and clear seem to be for the next seven OK buttons. When viewing a text, the buttons seem to be next, back, browse, cross ref, begin, recall, mask, plus note, view form [CrossRef and Recall are not explained in the supplied manual, although Recall plus is noted as a registered trademark of Insoft Ltd.]. The output may be sent to an ASCII text file. A real weakness is the inability to do a chemical structure search. These are available in the Structural Cambridge Database for Organic Compounds. The overall concept of BP on CD-ROM is a good one. No doubt at some future date all the major analytical reference texts could be on CD-ROM for fast searching and would be available as a stand alone version in a laboratory. It is much easier to search this than with the printed material. However, the software needs improving and suggested corrections to the software are only minor.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- (1) The British Pharmacopoeia CD-ROM is available from UNIPUB, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706. Phone: 301-459-7666 (or 800-274-4888), FAX: 301-459-0056. The price of this product is \$985.

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