

# SISCOM

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New Delhi-110012

**Correspondence to SISCOM may be addressed to :**

The Editor, SISCOM  
Society for Information Science  
C/o PID Building,  
Hillside Road, New Delhi-110012  
Grams : Care Publiform New Delhi  
Telephone : 586301, 5726014

*S & T Information Scene in India*

## Environmental Information System (ENVIS)

Kuldip Chand

Realising the paramount role of Information in effective and rational decision making for the management of environment, the Department of Environment Forests and Wildlife, set up in 1982 an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) as a decentralised system using the distributed network of data-bases to ensure integration of national efforts in environmental information collection, collation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to all concerned including policy planners, decision makers, research workers, and the public.

The ENVIS Network with the focal point located at the Department, presently consists of 10 ENVIS Centres on diverse areas of environment such as pollution control, toxic chemicals, environmentally sound and appropriate technologies, coastal and off-shore ecology, energy and environment, degradation of wastes, etc. Given below is a list of ENVIS Centres :

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Area</i>
1. Central Pollution Control Board (GPCB), New Delhi	Pollution Control (water and air)
2. Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC) Lucknow	Toxic Chemicals
3. Society for Development Alternatives, New Delhi	Environmentally sound and appropriate technology

-- *Contd.*

4. Environmental Services Group (ESG), New Delhi	NGO, Media and Parliament related to environment
5. Andhra University, Visakhapatnam	Eastern Ghats Ecology
6. Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi	Renewable energy and environment
7. Centre for Environmental Studies, College of Engineering, Anna University, Madras	Bio-degradation of wastes : Environmental Impact Assessment
8. Centre for Ecological Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore	Western Ghats Ecology
9. Environmental Planning and Co-ordination Organisation (EPCO), Bhopal	Environmental management related to the state of Madhya Pradesh
10. National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) Ahmedabad	Occupational Health

A quarterly abstracting journal, viz., "*Parvavaran Abstracts*" reporting Indian research on environment and related areas is being published by the ENVIS Focal Point in the Ministry. More than 500 scientific journals are scanned in the compilation of these abstracts and these are arranged under 12 major environmental disciplines such as Air Pollution, Water Pollution, Noise Pollution, Plant Ecology, Animal Ecology, Nature and Natural Resources Conservation, Health and Toxicology, Wastes, Forestry and Environment, Wildlife, Energy and Environmental Management.

The Focal Point is increasingly using computers for processing of environmental information to ensure speedy dissemination of information to all concerned. During 1989-90, the follow-

ing computerised data bases have been developed/updated : A bibliographic data base on 'environmental research' in Indian context; A data base of Indian sources engaged in environment and related activities; A profile of NGOs of the country involved in environmental conservation and protection; and A data base of experts in various environmental disciplines.

ENVIS maintains a close liaison with various other National Information Systems like National Information System on Science and Technology (NISSAT), Bio-technology Information System (BTIS), etc., for exchanging environmental information and to avoid duplication of efforts in the concerned fields.

The Focal Point of ENVIS acts as the National Focal Point (NFP/India) of INFOTERRA (An International Information System on Environment) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). As NFP, the focal point has registered more than 500 Indian sources engaged in environmental related activities for inclusion in the "International INFOTERRA Directory of Environmental Sources" published by UNEP. These national sources are referred to by UNEP for environmental information in their corresponding disciplines. The ENVIS Focal Point as INFOTERRA's National Focal Point caters to both National and International users.

Based on the information potential of ENVIS, UNEP has also designated ENVIS Focal Point as the Regional Service Centre (RSC) of INFOTERRA to cater to the environmental information needs of the South Asian Sub-region Countries.

### **Quick Access Information System (QAIS)**

Access to authentic information is essential for scientific reporting. For not only should a news report about a new discovery or new

research be readable, it should also present facts without distortion. Unfortunately the science writer in India has always been handicapped by the lack of easy and timely access to information on research activities of R&D institutions. To fill in this gap, vital for better spread of knowledge, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has launched the Quick Access Information System (QAIS). The QAIS is based on computerized data base created on the basis of inputs from the different CSIR laboratories which is periodically updated. All such updated information about the research activities in the CSIR laboratories is contained in a cassette, and a copy of it is provided to each laboratory. A prospective user can go to any CSIR laboratory and get information about R&D work going on in any CSIR laboratory.

The QAIS can provide information not only about research on any particular topic being pursued in different CSIR labs but also about the research activities of any particular CSIR scientist or of any particular CSIR laboratory.

The QAIS was launched at a workshop in New Delhi on 20 April 1991 with a hands-on demonstration for media persons, science writers and scientists.

## INSDOC

The Annual Report of the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), New Delhi for 1989-90 has been published. The Report shows the reorganisation of existing 21 Sections and projects into eight divisions, two units and a cell. Graphic Arts & Printing Unit has been transferred to the Publications & Information Directorate (PID) for a more effective utilization of the combined printing facilities.

During the year, INSDOC acquired a super-mini system with 5GB disc space, 10 PC-ATs, 35 PCXTs, 1 Optical Character Recognition system, 2FAX machines, 2CD-ROM drives and 2 DTP systems along with scanners and laser printers.

Besides, in order to expedite the bibliographic search, online access to international databases was established, which facilitates instant searching of more than 300 databases abroad. Manual search of bibliography was phased out. In order to pursue one of the stated objectives of INSDOC, i.e. to act as a repository of the entire S & T information generated in the country and be a channel for providing information within and outside the country, the National Science Library (NSL) of INSDOC continued to acquire almost all the S & T journals published in India.

Some of the activities are described below :

Publication of *Indian Science Abstracts (ISA)*, a fortnightly which reports the research work published in Indian Scientific publications and also those of Indian scientists published abroad. A total of about 24000 entries were processed during the year. Eighteen issues of ISA covering 17024 entries were compiled. From 1990 ISA is being published in machine readable form using the UNESCO software package CDS/ISIS version 2.3.

Under the NUCSSI Database Service, various outputs were generated from the database, which mainly related to catalogues of individual libraries, city catalogues, catalogues of current serials on specific subjects etc. About 5000 pages of computer printout was generated.

The second revised edition of *Directory of Scientific Research Institutions in India* covering 1376 scientific research institutions in the country was published.

## New File on STN International

STN, the pathway to a family of databases relating to chemistry, physics and other scientific fields, has added the following new database :

PLASNEWS -- This file provides updates on what is happening or about to happen in the plastics industry. The "news" segment of the file contains over 8,000 news articles from 1987 to

date. PLASNEWS is produced by D & S Data Resources/PLASPEC, based in Yardley, Pennsylvania. Working with one of the leading magazines in the industry, *Plastics Technology*, D & S/PLASPEC gathers the latest news, market statistics, and pricing information from a variety of sources. PLASNEWS is available now through STN. In the near future, searchers will also be able to access this file through the menu interface that is part of the MPD Network, the Materials Property Data Network available exclusively through STN.

### **Disaster Policy Aids CA Subscribers**

The worst case scenario for a current *Chemical Abstracts* (CA) subscriber: your entire collection of CA dating from 1907 is damaged or destroyed in a disaster i.e., fire or flood. Your first thoughts are "Will CAS replace the collection; if so, how much will it cost."

Unfortunately, this scenario is less fiction than real. So, for a number of years, CAS has had a disaster policy in place to aid CA subscribers experiencing partial or total loss to their CA collection.

Ruth Ann Geiger, CAS customer service manager, says, "Our disaster policy is simple - if you are a current CA subscriber and all or any part of your CA collection is destroyed in a disaster, CAS will replace the lost CA issues and indexes free of charge, to the extent available, from stocks of microform backcopies or printed copies, if no microform counterpart exists. This policy applies to CA subscribers any where in the world." According to Geiger, the only qualifying stipulation is that CAS must have received the subscriber's binding order and timely payment for CA for the same year as the one in which the disaster occurred.

Presently, CAS customer service is replacing many volumes contained in the 9th, 10th and 11th Collective Indexes to CA that received water damage in a disaster at the James B. Duke Library, Furman University, in Greenville, South Carolina.

### **CEHANET**

The Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA) and WHO establishment in Jordan have developed a network called CEHANET. One of the information centres of each country of the region has been designated as CEHANET National Focal Agency.

CEHANET is likely to promote regional cooperation in information exchange in the field of environmental health and to help build and strengthen the national information infrastructure of its member countries. CEHA will plan and coordinate the development of the network by providing training and technical support, developing and managing CEHANET regional document database on environmental health and mobilization of funds.

### **CECDB**

The Chinese Enterprises and Companies Database (CECDB), available in both Chinese and English versions, is a factual database providing information on Chinese enterprises and companies such as name of the firm, address, scope of business, production capability, types and specifications, technical level, investment environment etc. The English version is likely to enter major international on-line information retrieval systems as an individual file, which is the first Chinese database on the international market. The Chinese version will be put into a computerised on-line retrieval system. This will enable users to promptly and accurately retrieve information from various facts e.g., organisation

name, product, business, subject, scope of operation, location etc.

### **Eurodiabeta**

*Eurodiabeta* is a Europe-wide scheme aimed at improving and providing care to people with diabetes, which afflicts 6.5 m Europeans and over 100 m people worldwide. Started on 10th January 1990 at London, St. Thomas Hospital, was initiated by physicians, scientists and engineers for 15 centres under the European Commission's Advanced Informatics in Medicine. The computer-based information system, provides information on patients, suffering from diabetes and their treatment profiles.

T.K.M.

### **Forthcoming Events**

#### **SIS Activities**

The Executive Committee of the Society for Information Science has identified the following activities to be undertaken by the Society during 1991-92.

#### **i) Training courses**

1. BHEL sponsored training course on "Use of CDS/ISIS for Library and Information Services" to be held at NISTADS, New Delhi in September, 1991.
2. Computer Applications in Library and Information Services, New Delhi, November, 1991.
3. Technical Communication Course, New Delhi, (Date yet to be fixed)

#### **ii) Eleventh Annual Convention and Conference**

The Eleventh Convention and Conference of SIS will be held at National Chemical Laboratory,

Pune-8 in the 3rd week of January, 1991. The theme of the conference will be "Development & use of S&T Information in India"

### **Information Technology & National Development**

The Department of Library & Information Science and the Department of Computer Engineering, Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi are organizing an *International Conference on Information Technology and National Development* during 16-17 December, 1991. The Conference is sponsored by International Development Research Centre (Canada) and Banaras Hindu University.

The conference aims to deliberate on impediments to and problems of development that can be overcome by using information technology; to devise models and strategies for implementation of information technology solutions to the developmental problems; to project scenarios emerging out of implementation of information technology solutions.

The abstract and enquires about the conference should be addressed to :-

Dr. Y.P. Dubey  
Organising Secretary,  
Department of Library and Information Science  
B.H.U., Varanasi - 221005

### **Health Information for All (HIFA)**

The Medical Library Association of India is organizing its fourth national convention on "Health Information for All (HIFA): Appraisal and Projection to 2000 AD & Beyond" during 3-5 October, 1991 at B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad. The sub-themes are :

(i) Resources - Resource Crunch, Rationalization, Sharing (ii) Network Local, State, Regional & National Linkages; (iii) User Interaction - User Studies, User Education, Involvement in Planning & Execution of Developmental Activities, Social approach to health information; (iv) New Technology-cost and compatibility Applications and HSLs; (V) Standardization - Procedures, Practices, Possibilities and Future outlook - Professional and Inter & Intrasectoral Cooperation.

For registration and other details, please contact : -

Miss Avani Shah  
Organising Secretary,  
National Convention, MLAI  
C/o Central Library,  
B-J Medical College,  
Ahmedabad (Gujarat) 380016

### International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO)

The ISKO (General Secretariat : Woogstr 36a, D - 6000 Frankfurt 50) has the major task of promotion of research, development and application of all methods for the organization of Knowledge in general or of particular fields by integrat-

ing especially the conceptual approaches of classification research and artificial intelligence, is organizing an International Conference on the Subject, "Cognitive Paradigms in Knowledge Organization" during 26-28 August, 1992 in Madras. The Coordinator for ISKO in India is Dr. M.P. Satija RF/4 Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar 143005.

### Refresher courses in Library and Information Science

The Aligarh Muslim University is one of the four centres of the country selected by the UGC to conduct subject oriented courses for teachers and library staff working in University and College Libraries of the Northern and Central Regions during the session 1991-92. The following two refresher courses of 4 weeks duration will be conducted from (1) 2.8.91 to 10.9.91 on 'Academic Libraries - Management and Operations' and (2) 6.1.92 to 1.2.92 on 'Information Management in Libraries and Specialised Centres'. Prof. Mohd. Sabir Hussain and Mr Almuzaffar A.G. Khan will be the course Coordinators respectively. The closing dates are 15.7.91 and 6.12.91 respectively.

The Application form is obtainable from the Director, Academic Staff College or Chairman of the Department.

**SISCOM JUNE-JULY 1991**

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