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IAC's Document Delivery and More

By Carol Tenopir

IN 1976, when Information Access Company (IAC) announced their new online index to popular literature called *Magazine Index*, many of us thought, "it's such a simple and logical idea, why hasn't someone done it before?" In approximately nine years, IAC (now a division of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company) has caused us to repeat that thought on many occasions. They are a company with a knack for taking seemingly simple ideas (that are not always so simple to execute) and creating commercial products for a waiting library market. Over these nine years, in addition to *Magazine Index*, IAC has introduced:

National Newspaper Index, an online index to several major U.S. newspapers. Unlike other newspaper indexes, it is available on DIALOG, the most widely used online system;

Newsearch, which provides daily updating to newspapers and rapid indexing of materials destined monthly for other IAC databases;

Computer Output Microfilm (COM) versions of their most popular databases;

Legal Resources Index, an online index to the legal literature;

Trade & Industry Index, an online index to industry information.

In the last year, they have announced several new products, including some innovative ideas to help solve the problem of document delivery and a microcomputer software package to simplify searching.

ASAP databases

IAC's latest venture takes it into the document delivery field in an exciting way. *Magazine ASAP* and *Trade & Industry ASAP* are two new full text

databases that provide online search and retrieval of the complete texts of many publications indexed in the bibliographic parent files of *Magazine Index* and *Trade & Industry Index*. (All are available exclusively on DIALOG.)

Initially, the full texts of approximately 130 publications will be available in the two ASAP databases, including over 40 general interest magazines in *Magazine ASAP* (out of over 400 indexed in *Magazine Index*) and more than 80 business and trade publications in *Trade & Industry ASAP*. Forty-seven publishers are represented by these 130 publications.

A complete list of publications in the ASAP databases is available from IAC, but included are many magazines that are heavily used in libraries. A sample from the initial offerings includes: *American Libraries*, *Billboard*, *Business America*, *Car & Driver*, *Changing Times*, *Creative Computing*, *Datamation*, *Dun's Business Month*, *Industry Week*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Modern Photography*, *Motor Trend*, *National Review*, *The New Republic*, *Playboy*, *Popular Science*, *Rolling Stone*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Science*, *Science 83*, *Scientific American*, *Smithsonian*, and *Women's Wear Daily*.

The online versions include text only; no photographs, illustrations, or other graphics can be included. (This may not matter with publications such as *Dun's Business Month*, but is an obvious limitation with *Modern Photography*, *Smithsonian*, or *Playboy*.) Online coverage of the journals corresponds to what is now indexed in each journal in *Magazine Index* or *Trade & Industry Index*. In *Magazine Index*, this generally means front page to last page coverage excluding advertisements.

Three features make the ASAP files especially interesting. First, they contain controlled vocabulary indexing in addition to the complete texts. Library of Congress subject headings and IAC identifiers are included in the ASAP files as they are in the corresponding IAC bibliographic databases. The basic index for subject searching in

the ASAP files includes each word from the text (except stopwords) and all subject descriptors, identifiers, and words from titles.

Secondly, the ASAP files provide integrated access to publications from many different publishers. These publishers cover different topics and types of materials. IAC has a contract with DIALOG to provide the ASAP databases to be loaded online. IAC has contracted with the individual publishers who will receive a royalty based on online usage. Blodwen Tarter, vice president of marketing for IAC, says that electronic publishing is becoming more generally accepted among publishers, but she sometimes has to do some general educating to convince publishers of the potential benefits to them. IAC markets the idea of online access to a publisher as an *additional* distribution point for a publication, not as a substitute for traditional journals.

Thirdly, the ASAP files grow out of, and complement, existing bibliographic files. *Magazine Index* and *Trade & Industry Index* will continue as indexing-only databases. They include retrospective indexing and cover many more publications than are available through the ASAP full text databases. Tarter explains that by keeping the full text databases separate, the searcher "can make a conscious decision whether to free text search [on the words from the full text] or do a controlled vocabulary search" on the more comprehensive Index files. When the full text of an article is available online, this will be indicated in the *Magazine Index* or *Trade & Industry Index* record and the full text can be typed online or printed offline with DIALOG's format 9. If a searcher wants to actually search on words from the full text, s/he must use the ASAP files. (For articles in those journals available in full text form, this will be helpful in locating articles on topics too specific to be easily located with the often overly broad Library of Congress subject descriptors.)

The ASAP databases were first demonstrated at the National Online Meeting in New York in April and were

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available online in May. Coverage will go back to January 1983 by June 1984. *Magazine ASAP*, DIALOG file 647, and *Trade & Industry ASAP*, DIALOG file 648, are both \$84 per connect hour. (This is the same price as their bibliographic parent databases.) There is a charge of \$7 per full document, either printed offline or typed online with format 9. This \$7 charge applies whether the article is printed or typed from the Index files or from the ASAP files.

The ASAP files will be updated monthly. Except for the PR Newswire which will be included in *Trade & Industry ASAP*, full texts will not become a part of *Newsearch*, IAC's daily-updated database that contains current records for all of their databases.

According to DIALOG's Director of Marketing Libby Trudell, DIALOG has structured the full text record format to facilitate text searching. To search for two or more words occurring in the same grammatical paragraph of the full text, the "(S)" proximity operator is used. The "(W)" operator is also important in full text files to search for words within a specified distance of each other.

Both DIALOG and IAC see the ASAP files as "basically a document delivery mechanism" for their primary market, the online search intermediary. No decision has yet been made about possible future availability on *Knowledge Index*, DIALOG's end-user system. Both companies are waiting to see how use of the ASAP files develops and what directions the end-user market will take.

For search intermediaries, the document delivery capability is exciting. Because of the initial rather eclectic and limited collection of journals in the full text ASAP files, this use will probably be more important than using ASAP as separate searchable files in the immediate future. As more journals are added, the use and importance of these databases will increase. Used in conjunction with *Magazine Index* and *Trade & Industry Index*, ASAP files provide an important online service.

Microfilm collections

Online full text is not IAC's only venture into document delivery. Two microfilm collections are available to be used in conjunction with the COM version of *Magazine Index* and the COM-only *Business Index*.

The "Magazine Collection" consists of a set of 16mm microfilm cartridges containing the complete texts of articles from many journals indexed in *Magazine Index*. Article code numbers, indicated in the COM index, are used to retrieve the microfilm full text. The Magazine Collection goes back to 1980 and is updated twice each month.

As of early 1984, over 250 of the more than 400 popular magazines in *Magazine Index* are included in the microfilm collection. (This is much more extensive than what is available in the Magazine ASAP online full text database.) IAC promises more titles will be added and available to Magazine Collection subscribers at no additional charge.

The "Business Collection" will include approximately 230 journals from 1982 or 1983 to the present when it is available this summer. This represents 30 percent of the over 800 magazines indexed in *Business Index*, but 50-60 percent of the citations. (*Business Index* includes all of *Trade & Industry Index* and 500 of the 700 journals indexed in *Management Contents*.) There is some overlap of titles between Business Collection and Magazine Collection, but since access is generally by article location code from the subject index, articles will be arranged differently in the two collections and probably would be used by different patrons.

Libraries that now use the COM version of *Magazine Index* or *Business Index* are the primary market for either the Magazine Collection or the Business Collection or both. The article location codes will be added to the COM indexes for all articles from the beginning of the microfilm collection coverage. Code numbers are not now available in the online versions of the indexes, and when they are added online, they will be added only to current articles. According to Tarter, there will be no retrospective addition of location codes online as there will be in the COM indexes.

A subscription to the Magazine Collection is \$16,800 for the first year, with a continuing subscription price of \$12,400 per year. The price includes the 16mm microfilm cartridge collection with articles from 1980 to the present, 24 updates a year, a carousel cartridge stand, a microfilm reader-printer on a table console, and a "Contents Guide" index that allows a patron to find location codes for all articles in each individual publication. A price had not yet been set for the Business Collection as of April.

A microfilm Legal Collection is also under consideration to complement IAC's *Legal Resources Index*.

SEARCH HELPER

Last year IAC also entered the microcomputer software market with its front-end search system called SEARCH HELPER, aimed at the novice searcher or end-user. This year an enhanced version is being marketed for use with various microcomputers including the Eagle IIE, IBM PC, Apple II or Apple II+ (with upper/lower case capability), and Apple IIE.

SEARCH HELPER uses a series of easy-to-follow menus to help a searcher choose which IAC database they want to search, formulate searches, and log on to DIALOG through a telecommunications network. Because a search is formulated before the connection to DIALOG, online time is saved. There are some limitations, however. Much of the interactive power of searching is lost as the prerecorded search strategy is run on the system. Search strategies are limited to the use of Boolean ANDs only. The menu system does little to help good search strategy development and may inhibit it with the inability to link synonyms with logical ORs.

SEARCH HELPER is sold on a subscription basis. The annual subscription price for the software, documentation, and the software upgrades is \$200. A "packet" of 700 online searches, including telecommunications charges and up to 20 citations per search, costs an additional \$1750. These costs assume, of course, that the institution has one of the microcomputers mentioned earlier, configured as specified by IAC, plus a SEARCH HELPER-compatible 1200 baud modem. IAC estimates purchase price "for all the necessary equipment is less than \$2400."

When compared to searching the IAC databases at the standard connect cost, the subscription price for 700 searches is a bargain. Libraries that make heavy use of IAC databases might save some time and money by allowing patrons to use SEARCH HELPER to formulate their own simple searches. Patron self-help can be assisted with an optional coin-operation capability on Eagle IIE microcomputers purchased from IAC. Approximately 35 libraries now use SEARCH HELPER. IAC is currently conducting a survey to find out how many of these libraries use SEARCH HELPER for patron self-searching.

The limited search capabilities and ability to access only the IAC databases (plus *Management Contents*) limits the utility of this program. Users may get search results, but not understand why the results are not satisfactory or how they could be better. More experienced searchers may be frustrated by the limited capabilities offered by SEARCH HELPER. The program is simple to use and can be effectively used by novice users who have simple straightforward search needs. It errs on the side of being overly simplistic, and users should be aware of its limitations.

For information about any products or services from IAC, contact Information Access Company, 11 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002. (800) 227-8431 or (415) 591-2333.

