being given to the questions of whether libraries do or should provide subject indexes and how detailed they need to be in the information technology age. An enjoyable end to a most enjoyable seminar!

Reference

NFAIS Silver Anniversary
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In January 1958 fourteen founder-members formed the National Federation of Science Abstracting and Indexing Services, with the following purposes:

to provide a communication forum for the membership and the information community
to develop standards, where necessary, for interchange of products
to encourage special services for interdisciplinary and mission-oriented requirements
to work together in developing machine-readable data bases and techniques for producing them
to help provide access to primary documents cited through the Federation or through libraries and document centres, both government and non-government.

Today, with its membership more than tripled and its name changed to National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (NFAIS) to reflect its welcome to any organization concerned with providing access to the world's literature, from input through processing, publishing, and on to final use, its members include such diverse organizations as the Philosophy Documentation Center, the Institute for Scientific Information, Chemical Abstracts Service, Population Index, Library of Parliament (Canada) and Information Access Corporation. Roughly half the membership has a science-technology emphasis; the other half is concerned with business, law, social science and humanities information.

In 1983 the Federation celebrated its 25th anniversary, holding a conference from 27 February to 2 March. The theme, 'Information transfer—incentives for innovation', focused on new technologies for information transfer and dissemination. One session considered public sector/private sector information problems and solutions, and included speakers from the Executive Office of the President, the Association of American Publishers, and the National Library of Medicine. Marketing and training were the subjects of another session, while speakers from the US government and private industry discussed the next era of the information age. Melvin S. Day (Indian Head) reviewed the developments of abstracting and indexing services, and identified online information retrieval and the use of microcomputers as the two major technological advances. He projected that 'the future trend will be toward decentralization, with dependence on the major online [Federation] members being limited to those cases where the data is not available locally or where it is more economical to go to the large online vendor. Herein lies an opportunity for the abstracting and indexing services to provide for local manipulation, subsets of their data bases in accordance with standard profiles or even customized profiles'.

A regular feature of recent Federation conferences has been a session on new technology organized by Dr Rita G. Lerner of the American Institute of Physics. Developments discussed in this year's new technology session were IBM's EPISTLE system, the use of laser printers and recent developments in OCR (Optical Character Recognition). Carol Risher (Association of American Publishers) discussed current issues facing publishers in implementing new technological developments.

The Miles Conrad Memorial Lecture was established in 1966 by the Federation's Board of Directors to honour G. Miles Conrad, the first President. The 1983 Lecture was delivered by John E. Creps, Jnr., Past President of the Federation and recently retired from Engineering Information, Inc. His lecture presented a 'psycho-historical' approach to scientific information. Psychohistory is defined by Isaac Asimov as 'that branch of mathematics that deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli'. John Creps suggested that today's information services consist of needs which are met by the two conglomerate concepts of packages and time. In using these three ideas of need, package and time, systems may be characterized either 'as a need-oriented system requiring a breakthrough in the area of packaging or time, or a time-
oriented system requiring the understanding of needs or packaging. When the system is in balance . . . the elements of the equation relate to each other without creating a static that interferes with the use of the system'.

Special pre-conference sessions were organized as part of the Silver Anniversary Conference. Thirteen years ago the Federation established a three-day 'Indexing in perspective' seminar which has since been held in a number of locations, in North America, and in London and Warsaw. Approximately seventy-five alumni from these seminars attended an up-date session in which Everett H. Brenner (American Petroleum Institute) dealt with vocabulary developments, Stella Keenan (former Federation Executive Director) covered new index systems and Tefko Saracevic (Case Western Reserve University) concentrated on searching and retrieval. In parallel with the 'Indexing in perspective' up-date, Cathy Ferrere (INSPEC) organized a session dealing with training. Representatives of system vendors and data base producers discussed the training of end users, and the effect of the new technologies on the role of the trainer.

The third pre-Conference session was probably the most interesting and certainly the best attended of the Conference. Dale B. Baker (Chemical Abstracts Service) organized almost all the past Presidents of the Federation to take part in a forecasting session looking ahead to the next twenty-five years. Ben H. Weil (formerly Exxon*) discussed legal issues such as copyright, freedom of information, etc.; Everett H. Brenner (American Petroleum Institute) stressed the growing importance of the end user; and Lois W. Granick (American Psychological Association) discussed the respective roles of government and the private sector. Humanistic perspectives were considered by Richard H. Lineback (Philosophy Documentation Center), and Dale Baker covered international developments. Other past Presidents taking part in the session were H. E. Kennedy (BIOSIS); Russell J. Rowlett (Chemical Abstracts Service*); E. K. Gannett (IEEE); H. W. Koch (American Institute of Physics) and Joel J. Lloyd (American Geological Institute*).

In addition to the formal sessions of the 25th Anniversary Conference, the Federation published a Silver Anniversary volume edited by M. Lynne Neufeld et al.1 A history of the organization is given and Past Presidents and Executive Directors have made brief contributions on such topics as the importance of abstracts, the need for a code of ethics, and user considerations.

The volume also reproduces all the Miles Conrad Lectures, from 1968 when J. R. Smith (BIOSIS) talked of merging operations internationally, drawing on his experience as Director of INSPEC. Jack E. Brown (National Research Council of Canada) described the Canadian National Scientific and Technical Information System in 1972, and Carlos A. Cuadra (Cuadra Associates) discussed in 1980 the new roles for publishers, information service organizations and users in the current decade. Other Miles Conrad Lecturers included Robert M. Hayes (UCLA) (1970); Burton W. Adkinson (National Science Foundation*) (1971); Frederick G. Kilgour (Ohio College Library Center) (1976); William O. Baker (Bell Laboratories) (1977); and Saul Hener (Herner and Company) (1982).

This volume is a unique compilation and should be of interest to all involved in information service development. Unfortunately (probably due to the publication schedule, which was linked to the Conference dates, and the difficulty of co-ordinating contributions from more than twenty-five authors), the volume as distributed at the Conference has no index. A folded flap is provided for its later insertion, however, and Conference delegates were assured that the index would be distributed later. As Lynne Neufeld observes in her introduction and dedication, this publication constitutes 'a very personal family history, written about NFAIS by NFAIS members . . . Because this collection has been written by ourselves and about ourselves, personal opinion is mixed with professional comment—"ingroup" wit with serious policy observations'.

The Federation marked its 25th Anniversary by designating eleven individuals as Honorary Fellows. These included Raymond A. Jensen, first Executive Director of the Federation, and Burton W. Adkinson, who, as head of the US National Science Foundation Office of Science Information Science, was responsible for much of the US government funds provided to the Federation and its member services during the 1960s. The board of Directors also presented special citations to two of its previous Executive Directors—Stella Keenan and Toni Carbo Bearman (National Commission of Library and Information Science). Social events to celebrate the Silver Anniversary included a Monte Carlo Casino Night and a Champagne Reception and Dance.

Reference


*Last but not least to my wife, who helped in compiling the in-dex. The perfect hexameter.* from 'We're here' in Quotations from other lives by Penelope Gilliatt (Secker and Warburg, 1982), quoted by kind permission of the author.

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