



# New Technology

● **BIBLIOGRAPHIC RETRIEVAL SERVICES**, Latham, New York, began providing online service on an hourly, non-subscription basis on June 1. Any organization needing to search BRS databases may do so at the rate of \$35 per hour, plus database royalties and communication charges. No subscription fee or commitment to use a specific number of hours will be required under this plan. Infrequent users will be better served by the new hourly service; high volume users will still find the subscription service more cost-effective. For more information, contact BRS, 1200 Route 7, Latham, NY 12110; (518) 783-1161.

● **DORLEN PRODUCTS**, Greenfield, Wisconsin, has developed a new water alert annunciator, Model RI-2(AT), designed to provide an alarm signal at a remote point (up to 2,500 feet) for as many as twelve Water Alert sensors. The device can be placed at a circulation desk or other security point where staff can be most readily alerted. This new model can be set to scan test all the water sensors at weekly, daily, or other intervals. It also provides power to all connected sensors, thereby eliminating the problem of battery failure in an individual sensor.

● The seventeen **NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION** libraries have combined their holdings in a new computer-output microform (COM) catalog. The new catalog contains complete bibliographic records that previously required 600 card catalog drawers to store. The holdings of the five Washington, D.C., area NOAA libraries are complete from 1972 to the present; the other twelve NOAA libraries, scattered from Seattle to Miami, are complete for varying periods of time from 1976. The COM catalog, which went into full operation last March 31, will eventually be made available to users through online terminals. ■■



## Information Utilities: A Primer

*Just what is an "information utility?"*

An information utility is a company that sells information of any kind to a home or business over an electronic communications medium, and sends out a monthly bill. Just like the gas company or electric utility.

*Is a database producer an information utility?*

Only if the database company also maintains the base on its own computer and deals directly with the general public as a vertically integrated information supplier. Dow Jones News/Retrieval and The New York Times Information Bank are

examples. Otherwise, the database producer is simply a part of the information utilities industry in the same way a coal or uranium company is a part of the electric utilities industry.

*What are the supporting elements of the information utilities industry?*

They include: telecommunications networks; database producers (also called information providers, or "IP's"); manufacturers of video hardware for both the signal suppliers (e.g., online computers) or signal receivers (home and business users); software producers; videocassette recorders and videodisc players (when they are used to display information rather than entertainment); personal computers used as terminals to access information systems.

*Why is there such confusion over the term "Videotex"? What technologies does it include? What about the other term "Videotext," spelled with a T at the end?*

The confusion stems from British, French, and German rivalry over what to name a new technology (as well as what technical standards to adopt—see *C&RL News*, May 1982, p. 186). First came "Viewdata," the original British two-way television information system. "Teletext," a companion one-way system, and Viewdata were often referred to as "Videotext" systems. However, French and German desire for a more translatable (and non-British) term led to the coining of "Videotex" (rhymes with Telex). But when many Britons clung to Viewdata and many Americans interchanged Videotex and Videotext the semantics worsened.

*Is there light at the end of the Videotex tunnel?*

Yes. It appears that the French and Germans are winning the battle but are in danger of losing the linguistic war. Videotex (sans T) definitely appears to be gaining support. But at the same time, many Americans are using Videotex as a generic term to cover *all* systems that bring textual information into homes and offices. Thus, Reader's Digest's Source (with no relation to the European technology) calls itself an "ASCII Videotex" system. The New York Times' Video/Telecommunications writer, Andrew Pollack, writing about "teleshopping," explains that it is "one of a number of new electronic services, collectively known as Videotex, that are expected to become widely available during this decade."

*If Videotex becomes a broad generic term, will it be synonymous with "information utility"?*

Yes. Videotex operations (broadly defined) will be the pillars of the information utility industry.

*Will information utilities be adversely affected by a recession?*

Probably not. In fact, the opposite may be true. Bad times keep people at home. Even

people with jobs trim their spending on outside pleasures. But suppliers of in-home activities prosper. The creator of the game Monopoly became a millionaire during the Depression. Perhaps vid-

eotex companies will also benefit from a recession.—*Information courtesy of Online, Inc., Weston, Connecticut.* ■■



# Publications

## NOTICES

• The *ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries* (108 pages, July 1982) presents the findings of a national mail survey of 1,400 libraries conducted in January, 1982, by the ALA Offices for Research and for Library Personnel Resources with assistance from the University of Illinois Library Research Center. The report features 39 tables including, for each of 13 positions, a table of scheduled salary ranges and a table of salaries actually paid to academic or public librarians in four geographic regions of the U.S. Copies are available for \$40 from the American Library Association, Order Department, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

• *Approval Plans in ARL Libraries* (109 pages, April 1982), SPEC Kit #83, reports on a survey which requested specific data on the number and types of approval plans in major research libraries and the current justifications for using or not using plans. The kit includes 22 documents responding to the survey, questions and criteria for evaluating vendors, statistics, general comments, and guidelines. SPEC kits are available by subscription from the Systems and Procedures Exchange Center, OMS/ARL, 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Individual kits may be purchased for \$15 (prepayment requested) with checks made payable to the ARL Office of Management Studies. Library members of ARL receive kits for \$7.50.

• The University of Texas *Collection Development Policy* (2d edition, 1982) is now available from UT-Austin. Organized by subject of collecting interest, the guide contains collection guidelines that specify the language of the collection, chronological guidelines, treatment of subject, types of materials to be collected, and date of publication. The policy may be ordered for \$15 from Publications, The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, P.O. Box P, Austin, TX 78712.

• *Cooperative Collection Development in Multitype Library Networks* (131 pages, 1982) outlines the essential elements of cooperative collection development and includes guidelines, procedures, and examples of successful projects. This report is the result of a statewide meeting of Missouri librarians who convened to draft guidelines for the new Missouri Library Network. Copies are available for \$10 to Association mem-

bers, \$15 to non-members, from the Metropolitan Washington Library Council, 1875 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006. Checks should be made payable to MWCOG; a \$5 fee is charged for billing.

• *Directory of Library Reprographic Services*, compiled by Joseph Z. Nitecki (540 pages, 8th edition, 1982), has been published by Meckler Publishing. Sponsored by the Reproduction of Library Materials Section of ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division, the guide reprints survey forms returned by over 500 photoduplication departments in both the United States and some foreign countries. Copies are available for \$24.95 from Meckler Publishing, 520 Riverside Avenue, Westport, CT 06880.

• *Directory of Michigan Academic Libraries 1981-1982*, edited by Joy Pastucha (31 pages, 3d edition, 1982) may be purchased for \$3 from the Michigan Library Association, 226 W. Washtenaw, Lansing, MI 48933.

• *Directory of Special Libraries and Collections in Florida* (300 pages, 1st edition, 1982) has been published by the Florida Chapter of the Special Libraries Association and includes data on more than 500 collections and libraries. Copies are available (\$12 for SLA members, \$15 for non-members) from Linda Wyman, Corporate Library, REL, Inc., 3800 S. Congress Ave., Boynton Beach, FL 33435.

• *Document Delivery Systems in ARL Libraries* (101 pages, March 1982), SPEC Kit #82, has been published by the Association of Research Libraries. Both internal and external delivery are covered in this survey report, which contains 26 documents illustrating certain aspects of these systems, including telefacsimile transmission and electronic mail. SPEC kits are available by subscription from the Systems and Procedures Exchange Center, OMS/ARL, 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Individual kits may be purchased for \$15 (prepayment required) with checks made payable to the ARL Office of Management Studies. Library members of ARL receive kits for \$7.50.

• *Finding a Position: Strategies for Library Science Graduates*, by Robert Delzell (26 pages, May 1982), details the art of writing resumes for librarian positions, how to make the most of a cover letter, common mistakes to be avoided, and recent trends in the library employment market. The manual is number 153 in the *Occasional Pa-*