

Electronic Publishing

The European Physical Society through its Action Committee on Publications has published a report on the Workshop that it organized at the end of last April, at which leading publishers exchanged views on the growing practice of submitting physics manuscripts in electronic form, either on disc or directly by electronic mail. Present were representatives of the American Physical Society, Elsevier, EPS, IOP Publishing and Springer Verlag as well as experts in text processing, automatic text reading, literature filing and data handling, plus members of the Action Committee under its chairman Professor Ferenc Mezei who represented the "users".

Although the present practices adopted by the different publishers varied from one to another, their experiences overlapped a great deal and the general desire to establish common ground rules was manifest. Everywhere, it seems, it is the authors who are pushing the development and the remarkable growth in interest has come about without any real 'selling' by the publishers.

All have seen T_EX as the starting-off computer language for generating scientific texts, but are preparing for the later versions such as L^AT_EX while recognizing that they will need to be as versatile as possible for a long time. Moreover, all accepted the fact that paper will be with us for an indefinite time and although eventually authors who submit electronic copy may see their material handled a shade faster, and one would hope with marginally greater precision, the author who submits a MS in traditional form will not be penalised.

The arguments in favour of standardisation are two-fold. On the one hand, authors are unlikely to bother with more than one text-formatting process (and then only if it is logical and user friendly); on the other, authors do not want to prepare their manuscripts for one particular journal and then have to re-write if they subsequently send them to another. For their part, the publishers wish to convert to their particular styles, sub-edit to the degree they consider desirable and consequently receive material in as constant a form as possible. This is not just to serve the publishing operation, but also to simplify the preparation of data bases, abstract listings, anthologies, etc.

Much work has already been put into the development of a *Standardised General Mark-up Language* and not only by the physics community. SGML is an internationally accepted language of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). It is somewhat incomplete from a physics viewpoint, but it nevertheless exists and has won a large measure of support. Indeed it would be quite irresponsible at this stage to ignore it or try to supersede it. On the other hand, one cannot expect every physicist to become an expert in SGML tagging and it will be up to the word-processor manufacturers and the software experts to devise packages that simplify the author's task as far as possible. Happily T_EX is particularly suitable for transformation into SGML.

The Rôle of the EPS

Where then does the EPS fit? In the first place, the EPS has already made a major

contribution in bringing so many physics publishers round a table, and it should be added not as a cartel, but as a task force for the benefit of all. And there is much to do to promote more standardisation.

Basic to any standard presentation of a manuscript is the *Document Type Definition* (DTD): the elementary description of what a manuscript contains and the terms used to describe the different components — title, author, text, paragraph, heading, etc. It has been agreed that under the auspices of the EPS we shall try to produce an internationally acceptable DTD for physics within the context of SGML.

The draft of this is being prepared by Dr. E. van Herwijnen of CERN and Dr. N.A.F.M. Poppelier of Elsevier with Professor J.C. Sens as coordinator. They will examine the problems and make their recommendations in the spring, following which publishers will be invited to comment and we shall then try to produce a final Definition.

This is at this first level. The intention is to go progressively deeper, all the time keeping a watch on developments in other sciences to make sure that physics does not go out on a solitary limb. The EPS is ideally situated to promote this collaboration amongst publishers while keeping the interests of physicists firmly in mind.

Copies of the report entitled *Electronic Publishing* have been sent to all participants at the workshop, to members of the Action Committee, and to all the publishers of EPS Recognized journals. Further copies in limited number may be obtained from the Secretariat at a price of SFR 30.— per copy.

E.N. Shaw

Secretary, Publications Committee

SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE

SAINT GOBAIN

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

ON THE PHYSICS OF DISORDERED MATERIALS

Applications are invited for a Saint Gobain post-doctoral fellowship tenable for a calendar year at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, starting from 1 October 1991. This fellowship carries a stipend of 27000000 Italian Lire *per annum*, and may be renewed for a second year. Applications, addressed to **Professor L.A. Radicati, Director, Scuola Normale Superiore, Piazza dei Cavalieri 7, I-56126 Pisa**, should reach Pisa no later than 30 April '91.



German Societies United

Prof. Theo Mayer-Kuckuk, President of the German Physical Society (left), and Prof. Gerd Röpke, Chairman of the Physical Society of the former Democratic Republic (right), signing the agreement that united the two societies. The ceremony was held on 20 November 1990 in the presence of a small audience in Berlin's Magnus-Haus, the historic headquarters of the former east German society. The agreement stipulates that the archives and the Max Planck Memorial Library housed in the Magnus-Haus (it now becomes a regional office of the GPS) will be preserved and that five new divisions will be created. Detailed organizational arrangements, new by-laws and such like will be finalized in 1993.

International Workshop on

Physical Processes and Chemical Reactions in Turbulent Liquids

to be held at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne
from April 15 to 16, 1991.

Organization: The Lausanne Pilot Centre of the European Research Community on Fluids, Turbulence and Combustion (ERCOFTAC)

Deadlines: Preregistration: 31 January 1991
Submission of extended Abstracts: 28 February 1991
Hotel Registration: 31 March 1991

All preregistrants will receive the Second Announcement. Correspondence should be addressed to: **Prof. Dr. Franz S. Rys – ERCOFTAC Chemistry Workshop '91 DME/IMHEF – EPFL – CH-1015 LAUSANNE, Switzerland**
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26-30 Aug. 1991 Lausanne, Switzerland
16th International Conference on Infrared
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A: 30.05.91 / Ab: 01.05.91 / PP, P: 15.06.91