Authors are not provided with proof copies unless they request them. Abstracts of all articles are typeset in the Standard Generalised Mark-up Language (SGML) by the printers and then converted by the desk editors into ESP-LaTeX for uploading.

The future will possibly see some linking of usage to payment and the conversion of the 20% of articles submitted non-electronically into electronic versions to give a truly 100% electronic journal. It is not clear whether at this stage the author supplied articles which have been accepted should be available before publication. They would be, in principle, be available sooner and this could be seen to be unfair. Moreover, they are often already accessible elsewhere *via* a preprint server, albeit usually in a different form since the publishing process generally adds some value to all texts, and a significant amount to the 50% that are modified as a result of refereeing.

Perhaps the most exciting development is the ability to integrate multimedia simulations of say an experiment, thereby going substantially beyond what a conventional printed journal can offer. The electronic version will thus remain for the foreseeable future as a complementary but valuable service to subscribers, providing more than say distribution of archived issues on compact discs (CD-ROMs). Some publishers are adopting the latter route, notwithstanding the disadvantage that some of today's CD-ROMs may be unreadable in a few years time if computer operating systems become incompatible with CD software.

Nuclear Physics Electronic
Further information/help

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ONLINE HOSTS

INSPEC and *Physics Briefs* to Merge

In terms of the number of databases offered in the field of science and technology, STN International with service centres in Germany (at the Fachinformationszentrum Karlsruhe – FIZ), Japan and the USA is now equal in size to the other largest host of online information (the number of databases will rise from 180 at the end of 1993 to 207 by the end of this year). In terms of the total time users are connected online, STN is the second largest host and is well known to physicists as the supplier of *Physics Briefs* which is produced by FIZ. Following an agreement with the UK's Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) to collaborate in the joint production of the *INSPEC* database, FIZ will stop producing *Physics Briefs* as a separate product at the end of 1994. FIZ estimates that it will be contributing about 20% of entries to the enlarged *INSPEC* database (mostly in physics and physics-related topics).

Bernward Jenschke, who is responsible for marketing at FIZ Karlsruhe, says that the decision to merge the two was the main outcome of a project that supplied *Physics Briefs* on-line to about 40 institutes and universities in Germany for a fixed price of DM 4500.– per annum (the three-year project ends at the end of 1994). Physicists have always been interested in the peripheral and applied fields covered by *INSPEC*, and Germany's physicists felt that it was pointless to continue operating two databases that had a large number of duplicate records (about 60% for the 1990-91 period — equivalent to about 80000 records each year). The plan is to run a duplication check on the online records of *INSPEC* (which began in 1969) and *Physics Briefs* (which began in 1979) and to transfer non-duplicates to *INSPEC* by the end of this year. From then on only the enlarged *INSPEC* database will be produced.

The IEE has not yet decided if the fixed pricing scheme will continue in Germany (it seems likely that it will, at least for the pilot group of physics institutes, but an indication of the price is not available). Other institutes as well as centres elsewhere pay according to usage, with academic sites benefiting from an 80% reduction. The trend is clearly towards fixed pricing and STN's main difficulty is to obtain the agreement of all its approximately 60 database suppliers so that universities and the like can be offered a fixed price for a package comprising the complete set of 207 databases. The preferred model (which is already operating for a mathematical database) is to offer a fixed price for online access, and to charge a small supplement for the printed version (it would come with a compact disc version).

Commenting on the impact of new technology, Dr. Jentsche felt that STN could offer browseable, user-friendly databases *via* Internet (possibly using World-Wide Web) which handle graphics and complicated formulae. The problem is that while the lines into Karlsruhe have been upgraded recently to 1 Gbyte/s, most institutes (and industry if it is connected) are still working at 9.6 kB/s. The increased availability of ISDN lines working at 64 kB/s does not greatly improve the situation as it will still take a minute to download a useful image. The only effective solution is a general improvement in networking capacity.

STN celebrated its 10th anniversary last year.

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JOURNALS & PROCEEDINGS

***Classical & Quantum Gravity* Goes Online**

Classical & Quantum Gravity published monthly has gone online as a 100% electronic journal in the sense that articles which are not submitted in TeX or LaTeX are converted by the publishers (IOPP). Anyone can browse tables of contents and search a database of articles *via* the IOPP WWW homepage at **http://www.ioppublishing.com** where www.ioppublishing.com = 193.131.119.1. There are a few hundred subscriber sites whose staff have access authorisation based on Internet addresses. Registered users can download TeX or LaTeX files and figures in GIF or Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) formats. If your institute subscribes to the journal you can register as a user by filling in a form available by anonymous ftp at **ftp.ioppublishing.com/pub** (where ftp.ioppublishing.com = 193.61.87.2). Telephone +44-117-929 74 81 or email to custer@ioppublishing.co.uk for information.

US Plans Well Advanced

The July/August issue of *Computers in Physics* published by the American Institute of Physics (AIP) describes how the AIP's *Applied Physics Letters* will be available online in January 1995 as *APL Online*. It will use the Online Computer Library Center's EJO server system and the Guidon client software adopted by *Electronics Letters Online* (subscribers will be mailed a copy of Guidon for PC, Mac or X-Windows). Texts will be translated from files generated in a proprietary format by AIP's established in-house electronic composition system to Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) tagged files using the ISO12083 Document Type Definition standard that has been endorsed by EPS, AIP and the American Physical Society (APS). Line figures will be in TIFF and photos in the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format.

ISO12083, hitherto available as a draft, has been released very recently (contact national ISO agents for information) as a definitive standard as a printed version. A diskette version is planned. This will be the first time that the International Standards Organization has provided a diskette.

The much-heralded launch by the APS of *Physics Review Letters Online* has been delayed by a few months to mid-1995. There will be two server sites providing user access and documents will be SGML-tagged. The Optical Society of America (OSA), which is collaborating closely with the APS and the AIP, aims to have early notices (25 pages abstracts) of all articles published in OSA journals available *via* Internet. It is also looking at putting *Optics Letters* online. ➤

Classical and Quantum Gravity
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OPTOELECTRONICS
Photonics Science News
HEAVY ION PHYSICS