



Newsline

Vol. 3.2: Summer 1998

Taking to the field this Summer ...

JOHN MURISON

For many people the Summer months are for rest and recuperation – for taking a well-earned holiday, or for watching World Cup football, Test Matches or Wimbledon. At EDINA, however, we are working on an ambitious schedule of new and revised services, to be ready in time for the start of the new academic year in the Autumn. (OK, the odd football match caught our interest as well!) The following are currently being developed:

UKBORDERS A Web interface for the popular digitised boundaries service has just completed its Beta trials – thanks to all those users who took part. See the item overleaf about the new UKBORDERS interface, and why we think it's wonderful!

SALSER A new Web interface for the database of serials holdings is nearing completion. See the details below.

Palmer's Web A Web interface for Palmer's Index to The Times, currently

only available via Telnet, will be developed over the Summer.

PCI Web A new version of the Periodicals Contents Index Web interface will be developed later in the Summer.

AGDEX This is a new service – watch press for further details! EDINA AGDEX is a database of agricultural press and journal articles, collected by the Scottish College of Agriculture. A Web interface to this database is due to be available in early October.

In addition to these services, EDINA has now made available the Environmental Sciences & Pollution Management database from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts. Please see the article overleaf giving details.

We are looking for users willing to take part in field trials of these services before the start of the new academic year. Please contact the EDINA Helpdesk if you would like to take part in one or more of these trials.

New improved SALSER!

BEN SOARES

EDINA SALSER, the Scottish Academic Libraries SERIALS database service, allows serials searches across the holdings databases of Scotland's academic libraries. SALSER has been redesigned and reimplemented using OCLC's SiteSearch 4 software. The functionality achievable by this is superior to the

freeWAIS/SFgate implementation currently in service.

Users of the new SALSER will see an improved interface enabling record marking for later perusal and printing. The data are enriched and supplemented by the use of the ISSN authority register: this contains additional information for all

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journals with an ISSN. We are also providing the option of searching COPAC – the CURL OPAC – remotely, thus increasing the number of searchable libraries.

One of the major reasons for porting the SALSER databases and interface to SiteSearch is to allow remote access via SiteSearch's built-in Z39.50 Server.

This access is anticipated to come from other organisations participating in the DNER (Distributed, National Electronic Resource – see the article overleaf), for example from bibliographic databases whose users may want to perform a holdings query on SALSER's libraries. Users of other libraries may also wish to link in to the Z39.50 Server to augment their own OPACs.

The new-look SALSER will be made available via the EDINA Web pages after it has been through a period of Beta testing. Information for remote Z39.50 clients wishing to make contact with SALSER will also be made public on the Web.

The 'Distributed, National Electronic Resource'

MARGARETE TUBBY

The 'Distributed, National Electronic Resource', or DNER, is the centrepiece of the JISC's collections policy, and embodies its strategy for providing a "wider range of information types and delivery modes", developed "in a coherent and unified way".

On 1st June almost 70 librarians gathered at an open JIBS meeting in Milton Keynes for a lively and stimulating discussion of what the DNER is all about. Alfi – the 'Alternative for ISI' – provided the immediate context, but the discussion took a much wider view as speakers from JISC, CHEST, AHDS, BIDS, COPAC, MIDAS, NISS and, of course, EDINA presented their visions of the DNER and their strategies for implementing it.

Lorcan Dempsey, UKOLN Director, gave an overview of the JISC's policy for the DNER and sketched out practical examples of what the DNER would do for end-users. These included the prospect of cross-searching thematically related databases, such as PCI and IBSS, and linking to COPAC, SALSER and similar 'locator' resources which help users find out which libraries hold a desired journal. Users would have different views onto the DNER, depending on their thematic interests, institutional or geographical ties, etc. The particular view presented to an individual user could depend on information held in his or her user profile, used in conjunction with 'metadata' attached to the services of potential interest.

So what makes the DNER? There are many important issues, including copyright and licensing, archiving, and authentication. But two key ingredients are *content* and *enabling technology*.

Content includes resources outside JISC funding as well as JISC's offerings, and research data as well as bibliographic information. The resources could be offered via national datacentres, other specialised centres, commercial vendors or HEIs themselves. They could be hosted in the UK or abroad.

In order to link content in a meaningful way, the JISC has to promote a framework of standards, protocols and metadata. The keyword is *interoperability*, and the JISC's favoured

approach towards achieving it is via the Z39.50 protocol. All the data providers represented at the meeting expressed their commitment to Z39.50 as part of their strategy.

Interoperability is required in two dimensions: horizontally, to allow users to search a number of similar databases simultaneously; and vertically, to allow seamless progression through all stages of information acquisition. The eLib MODELS project expresses these stages in terms of four 'user verbs':

<i>discover</i>	a data object, e.g. a journal article, by use of a database of abstracts or indexes
<i>locate</i>	e.g. a service provider, via holdings lists or union catalogues
<i>request</i>	the use of a service, e.g. via inter-library loan
<i>access</i>	an item of interest, e.g. via personal visit or online access

It is fair to say that EDINA was seen as something of a frontrunner with regard to Z39.50. Our work with OCLC SiteSearch software (reported in previous issues of *Newsline*) has started to pay off and we were able to introduce our work-in-progress and our medium to long term strategy at the meeting. The basic intention of our current development work, outlined on the first page of this *Newsline*, is to provide cross-searching of databases and links to local holdings facilities, thus supporting interoperability for the *discover* and *locate* stages.

In the medium term we aim to develop interoperability by enabling other data service providers, union lists and individual libraries to link into SALSER, and EDINA services to link into COPAC and individual OPACs. We have been developing a Z39.50 target for BASIS databases, and are willing to share the results of this work with other JISC datacentres. In

A5 flyers describing EDINA BIOSIS, PCI and Palmer's Index to The Times are enclosed with this *Newsline*. Contact EDINA if you would like copies of these. A3 posters are also available.

addition, our work with CASA offers the prospect of an on-line link to the ISSN World Serials Register.

With the support of Z39.50 technology by the JISC and the datacentres, the means to turn the existing range of resources into the DNER are nearly in place. However, a third ingredient is needed, namely co-operation and collaboration between all concerned. It was encouraging that the data service providers agreed on this, as they did on the technical issues. The implementation of the ATHENS registration and authentication facility as a means of 'linking it all together' is an indication of this willingness to co-operate.

Thanks to Betsy Anagnostelis, Alison Bremner and Wendy Shaw for organising this event.

JIBS intend to make the meeting presentations available from their homepage at <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/jibs/>

Glossary of terms

A more complete glossary is contained in Appendix C of the JISC Five Year Strategy 1996-2001, July 1996.

AHDS The Arts and Humanities Data Service.

Alfi Alternative for ISI: a proposal to provide the equivalent of the ISI dataset (currently made available to the Higher Education community by BIDS) through a combination of other datasets to which the community already subscribes.

ATHENS A registration and authentication system operated by NISS.

BASIS A database management software package produced by Information Dimensions Ltd.

BIDS Bath Information and Data Services. A JISC-funded national datacentre, based at Bath University.

CASA Cooperative Archive of Serials and Articles. A project funded under the 'Telematics for Libraries' group of projects in the EU Fourth Framework. EDINA is involved in this project.

CHEST The Combined Higher Education Software Team: negotiates bulk deals on software and electronic information for the higher education community; based at Bath University.

COPAC A project to provide on-line access to the CURL OPACs.

CURL The Consortium of University Research Libraries.

DNER The Distributed, National Electronic Resource. The concept was developed during a series of MODELS workshops.

EDINA Edinburgh Data and INformation Access. A JISC-funded national datacentre, based at Edinburgh University.

eLib The JISC's electronic library programme of development projects.

HEI Higher Education Institute.

IBSS International Bibliography of the Social Sciences.

ISSN International Standard Serial Number.

JIBS JISC (assisted) Bibliographic dataservices. A user group for users of bibliographic and full text data services made available to the Higher Education and related communities.

JISC The Joint Information Systems Committee of the Funding Councils of England, Scotland, Wales and the Department of Education Northern Ireland.

MIDAS Manchester Information and Datasets and Associated Services. A JISC-funded

national datacentre, based at Manchester University.

MODELS An eLib project: 'Moving to Distributed Environments for Library Services'. The majority of the project work is carried out by staff of UKOLN.

NISS National Information Service and Systems: a JISC-funded service, based at Bath University.

OCLC Online Computer Library Center: a library computer service and research organization, the originators of the SiteSearch database software, used by EDINA for the provision of its Web-based services.

OPAC Online Public Access Catalogue.

PCI Periodicals Contents Index. A database produced by Chadwyck Healey Ltd containing tables of contents information from journals in the social sciences and the humanities. EDINA PCI is a service based on this database.

UKOLN UK Office for Library and Information Networking. A 'think tank' for the UK library and information communities; based at Bath University.

Z39.50 A NISO (National Information Standards Office) standard for a protocol of information retrieval.

UKBORDERS now (even more) wonderful!

ALISTAIR TOWERS

A new Web interface to the EDINA UKBORDERS service has just completed its Beta trials; many thanks to those users who took part. Here is a summary of its characteristics:

- W** is for Web access to digitised boundary data (DBD). A new, easy to use, graphical user interface has been implemented to give registered users access to a range of existing and new boundary sets.
- O** is for Online services that give 24-hour, 7-day access to the UKBORDERS service.
- N** is for Neat preview facility. This allows you to view your boundaries online *before* downloading the data to your hard drive.
- D** is for Data, and the many derived datasets that are now accessible through the new interface. They vary from National Park boundaries to Health Board Areas.
- E** is for Ease of extraction. Multiple boundary sets can now be selected and extracted in one go. The menus provided enable a straightforward specification of the required areas and boundary types.
- R** is for Reference information. The new interface gives you more information describing the specific boundary set downloaded. For example, a valid time period for the data is displayed adjacent to the dataset you select. This is important when you wish to extract census county boundaries, but the system holds numerous boundaries fitting the description, valid for different time periods. It is now obvious which dataset fits the user requirements.
- F** is for Formats. Several new formats are included in the interface. Arcview shapefiles as well as MapInfo native table format, suitable for use with the mapping component of Excel, are now supported, as well as the existing formats for Arc/Info and AutoCad.
- U** is for Useful compression tools. With boundary files stretching to many Megabytes, the ability to compress a file before downloading it – thus reducing download times – is useful to users, particularly those with slow Internet connections. Compression tools are available for both the UNIX and the Windows environments.
- L** is for Lynx support! The new interface is fully functional using the Lynx browser, as well as other flavours of browser currently in use (in particular, Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator).

Cambridge Scientific Abstracts

MARGARETE TUBBY

The Environmental Sciences & Pollution Management Database (ESPM) from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA) is now available from EDINA at a special rate for UK higher education. This multi-disciplinary database provides abstracts and references to the literature covering air, land, water and noise pollution, as well as bacteriology, ecology, toxicology, risk assessment, environmental engineering, environmental biotechnology, waste management and water resources.

ESPM is a fitting addition to the services provided by EDINA. From the start we have served users in the life sciences through a premier resource in this area, BIOSIS Previews. In the new academic year we will also host AGDEX, the database of references to UK farming literature collected by the Scottish College of Agriculture. These three databases will form the basis of a comprehensive service to the agricultural, environmental and life sciences communities.

Rather than duplicate effort by developing a new user interface, EDINA will provide a link to CSA's award-winning Internet Database Service on its European mirror site. This gives better response than a link to the U.S. service would, and will not incur charges for transatlantic traffic.

Acting as agent for CSA, EDINA will handle subscriptions and all aspects of user support. We plan to implement authentication of users through ATHENS by the start of the new academic year.

So how much does the service cost, and when will it be available? Institutions can choose between the complete data from 1981 onwards, or the current year plus five back-file years. In either case a special price is available for sites signing up before 31st October 1998: the cost of the annual site licence for the complete data is £3,655, and for the current year plus five back-file years is £2,507 (all prices exclusive of VAT). Refunds or credits will be available to institutions already subscribing to the ESPM database.

Sites may sign up for the service now. Alternative authentication will be provided until the link to ATHENS has been implemented. Documentation will be available for the new academic year.

Free institutional 30-day trials are available at any time. For further information on subscription and access to ESPM, please look at <http://edina.ed.ac.uk/espm> or contact the EDINA Helpdesk.

New look to the EDINA Web pages

A completely new release of the EDINA Web pages is on its way. As described in the last edition of *Newsline*, the new pages comply with guidelines on accessibility. We have also restructured the pages to make it easier to find the information you are likely to need.

Facilities have been added to ease navigation through the pages: for example, it will be possible to select from a pop-up menu of EDINA services from almost anywhere in the structure. In some places we have made use of Web server facilities to ensure that the most up-to-date information is always received. However, the Web pages are still compatible with older Web browsers; for example, we do not use frames.

As well as this redesign of content and layout, we are also using an updated Web server (Apache 1.3.0) to deliver the pages. This has some interesting features, including correcting mis-typed URLs. So, for example, if someone looks for /pamers/index.html, the server will correct this to /palmers/index.html automatically.

The pre-service version of these pages is available via a link from our current home page (<http://edina.ed.ac.uk>). Have a look and let us know what you think – you could even make use of our new ‘comments form’ facility!

EDINA staff changes

Dawn Griesbach, EDINA Documentation Officer, moved at the beginning of May to a new position within Edinburgh University's Department of Public Health Sciences. As well as looking after EDINA's documentation, Dawn was responsible for commissioning the now familiar EDINA logo and for the production of *Newsline*. We wish her well in her new post.

Paul Bedworth, of EDINA's Technical Infrastructure Team, has decided to move to London when his partner, Melanie Baird, who previously worked on the UKBORDERS interface, takes up a new position there later this Summer. Paul has contributed greatly to EDINA in his capacity as software engineer, and he and his skills will be missed.

However, we are pleased to announce that Ciaran Wills has accepted a short term contract as a replacement software engineer. Ciaran has worked as a vacation student on the eLib Digimap Project and, after completing his undergraduate studies in Computer Science at Edinburgh University this term (and being awarded a First Class Honours, no less), hopes to start postgraduate research in virtual reality later in the year, once funding has been secured.

We are also pleased to welcome Claudia Gröpl, who joined EDINA in June. Claudia is currently helping with EDINA administration, and will later be providing Helpdesk cover. Stop press! We have just appointed a new Documentation Officer, Paul Milne, who will be joining us in August from Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh.

ATHENS: the final countdown

The start of the new academic year is now not far away. This will be the first term or semester when all users of bibliographic databases provided by EDINA and BIDS need to have an ATHENS3 password in order to access these services. A number of institutions have already made the transition to ATHENS, but many administrators and site representatives are using this quiet period (if such it is) to put the new procedures in place. If you are among the latter, please remember that 31st August is the day of farewell to old-style user IDs.

Having made all the technical and administrative arrangements for authentication through ATHENS, the next task for site representatives is to inform existing users that their current, pre-ATHENS, user IDs will not be valid in the new academic year, and that they must obtain an ATHENS user ID instead. We may be able to help with this: many EDINA users have recorded their email addresses in their personal EDINA profiles. We can retrieve these for our site representatives, who can then email those users directly. So, if you would like a list of email addresses for your local EDINA users with ‘old-style’ EDINA user IDs, please get in touch with our helpdesk.

Of course, we are happy to answer any ATHENS questions related specifically to EDINA. You may find answers to some of your questions at <http://edina.ed.ac.uk/admin/athens/>

Edinburgh Data & Information Access

EDINA, based at Edinburgh University Data Library, is a JISC-funded national datacentre. It offers the UK higher education and research community networked access to a library of data, information and research resources. All EDINA services are available free of charge to members of UK higher education institutions for academic use, although university subscription and end-user registration are required for some services.

EDINA services are:

- EDINA Art Abstracts
- EDINA BIOSIS
- EDINA Palmer's Index to The Times
- EDINA PCI
- Ordnance Survey Strategi™
- SALSER
- UKBORDERS

Reference cards

Reference cards for EDINA BIOSIS, PCI and Palmer's Index to The Times are available for purchase at £12/100. They are also available free from the EDINA Web pages in PDF and PostScript formats.

EDINA contacts

Helen Kerr and Claudia Gröpl (Helpdesk)
 Margarete Tubby (User Services Manager)
 Alison Bayley (Manager, EDINA National Services)
 Peter Burnhill (Director of EDINA)
 Tel: 0131 650 3302 Fax: 0131 650 3308
 Email: edina@ed.ac.uk URL: <http://edina.ed.ac.uk>

EDINA subscription and registration

Some EDINA services require the completion of a licence agreement before those services can be made available to users. Free 30-day trials are available for most of these services.

For Art Abstracts, BIOSIS, the Periodicals Contents Index and Palmer's Index to The Times, licence agreements must be obtained from CHEST (email chest@chest.ac.uk) and a subscription fee must be paid. Individual users must register locally at their library.

For UKBORDERS, there is no fee for academic institutions within the UK, but a licence agreement must be signed (email edina@ed.ac.uk) and individual users must sign an End User Licence.

For Ordnance Survey Strategi, each institution is required to hold a current and valid Ordnance Survey Educational Copyright Licence in addition to a subscription to EDINA. Contact EDINA in the first instance (email edina@ed.ac.uk).

SALSER is a completely free service, with no subscription fee. No licence or prior registration is required.

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