EDINA launches PCI on the Web

A World Wide Web version of Chadwyck-Healey’s Periodicals Contents Index (PCI) will be available from EDINA in the second half of February. EDINA PCI-Web provides information about references to periodical literature in the humanities and social sciences, and contains details from the tables of contents of thousands of English and other European language journals. The database, which covers periodicals from their first date of issue until 1990, is still in the process of being published, and will be updated approximately three times per year while data is being gathered.

The new EDINA PCI-Web interface allows you to search the database by title keyword, author and subject, and to limit your search to specific years and languages of publication. Detailed context-specific help is available from every screen at the click of a button — even offering advice on how to improve your searching techniques. In order to satisfy users’ demands, we have designed PCI-Web to suit users of graphical Web browsers like Netscape® and Internet Explorer®, or any other browser that displays tables and supports on-screen forms. But don’t despair if your computer can only handle text: the Telnet interface to EDINA PCI, available since July 1996, will remain in service and will continue to be developed.

EDINA PCI-Web has a number of advantages over the existing Telnet version of EDINA PCI. Aside from the more attractive, easy-to-use point-and-click interface, users can enter all their search terms on a single screen instead of having to visit several screens to specify a search query with limits. PCI-Web provides details about both article citations and journals, and gives users access to the tables of contents of every journal in the database.

EDINA PCI-Web offers a simple, user-friendly interface, making use of software licensed from OCLC SiteSearch. Plans for future additions include: marking individual records and saving the marked list; a means of saving and re-using search queries; and provision for downloading records in a choice of formats so that they can be used with popular desktop database packages.

Staff and students at subscribing higher education institutes can have access to both EDINA PCI-Web and to the Telnet EDINA PCI service using their current user ID and password. To find out if your university or college has subscribed, check the list of registered institutions on the EDINA web pages at http://edina.ed.ac.uk/pci/list.html. If your institution is not yet registered, consult your local Computing Service or Library. Library subscription managers might like to know that EDINA PCI-Web is available at no extra cost to existing subscribers. A new subscription costs £200/year, or £500/year including online access via EDINA to Palmer’s Index to The Times and a licence for the English Poetry data on CD.

i Login to EDINA PCI-Web at: http://edina.ed.ac.uk/pci/pciweb
For information about PCI licensing, contact CHEST via their web page: http://www.chest.ac.uk/
Information about OCLC SiteSearch is available at: http://www.oclc.org/oclc/menu/site.htm.

Happy Birthday EDINA!

It’s just over a year since EDINA was launched as a UK national data centre on Burns Night, 25 January 1996. Today, EDINA has more than 200 subscribing institutions, and over 6,000 registered users.

Initially directed to provide a Telnet interface to its services, EDINA has now begun to offer services that allow interactive searching via desktop Web browsers. During the past year, we have hosted several training courses and attended myriad user meetings and exhibitions, both to learn and to promote our services. Now we are taking stock and planning what new services to offer, and what development projects to get underway, especially with respect to the eLib Programme.

Despite some growing pains during our accelerated adolescence, we remain eager to learn and to please. If you like what we are doing, let us (and others) know. Of course, we also want to hear from you about what we could do better.
EDINA hosts UKBORDERS, the national on-line service for the extraction of Digitised Boundary Data (DBD). UKBORDERS was set up with funding by ESRC under the 1991 Census Initiative. The data were acquired by the ESRC/JISC to allow the systematic mapping of 1991 census data, to make it possible to design new zones from small area building blocks, and to allow census data to be used in conjunction with Geographical Information Systems.

**Range of boundaries**

There are several sets of digitised boundaries available. The main ones correspond to the various levels of census geography — for example, census Enumeration Districts (EDs) and electoral Wards (for England and Wales), census Output Areas (OAs) and Pseudo-Postcode Sectors (for Scotland), and local government Districts (for Great Britain). The smallest digitised areas bought by ESRC/JISC were the 113,196 Enumeration Districts for England and Wales and the 132,080 unit Postcodes for Scotland. Higher level boundaries have been manufactured from these using a range of indexes and directories.

In addition, a set of historical boundary data relating to the 19th and early 20th centuries have recently been added to UKBORDERS. These include Poor Law Unions and Counties, Registration Districts, Administrative Units and Counties, all for England and Wales, and London Registration and Sub Districts. (These data were compiled and supplied by the Historical GIS project at Queen Mary and Westfield College, London.)

**Mapping software and data formats**

DBD files contain numerical representations of the boundaries of areas, such as those which describe the 1991 Census small area statistics (e.g. Enumeration Districts and Output Areas). This numerical representation consists of sets of co-ordinate pairs that define polygons which, when used in conjunction with appropriate software, can be used to produce outline or shaded areas in thematic maps of census and other statistics. The co-ordinate pairs correspond to the National Grid. These co-ordinates also allow map data from other sources, such as Ordnance Survey and Bartholomews, to be mapped in conjunction with the DBD. The data files also contain labels, information on nodes (where lines intersect) and information on the topology of the boundary outlines; these can be used to indicate conterminous areas. The map below is a straightforward example of what can be achieved using a combination of digitised boundary data and census statistics.

The use of digitised boundary data requires suitable mapping software, or a Geographical Information System (GIS). Software products differ in the digitised boundary data formats that they can handle. Anyone intending to access the digitised boundaries described here ought to investigate, at an early juncture, which mapping software they wish to use within their own computing environment. This decision should be made prior to accessing the data.

UKBORDERS provides facilities to convert the digitised boundaries into formats suitable for different mapping and GIS products. The most popular formats currently are ArcInfo (including ArcView) and MapInfo.

**Access**

Academic staff and students in the UK may extract digitised boundary data through UKBORDERS, and download them via ftp over the Internet. In order to gain access it is necessary to register. Details of registration and the mechanics of access can be found on the EDINA Web server at: http://edina.ed.ac.uk/ukborders/

**Terms of Use**

The digitised boundary data may be used only for academic research and teaching purposes, and anyone intending to make use of the data should understand and undertake to abide by the UKBORDERS Terms of Use, which is available in the Individual User Registration Pack. Intending users should obtain a copy of the registration pack from the technical site representative at their institute.

Please note that, because a number of agencies and firms own the copyright on the DBD, users are required to complete both the licence for Scottish DBD and that for England and Wales (and, when it becomes available, that for Northern Ireland) before they are granted access to the data. Each licence must also be witnessed. (Students must in addition get their supervisor to sign the licence form.) Information on which institutions are currently registered and who the `site reps` are can also be found on the EDINA Web server.

Further information about UKBORDERS is available from EDINA (edina@ed.ac.uk).
Recent Developments in EDINA BIOSIS

The front page article in the last Newsline described test releases of the Telnet interfaces to Palmer’s Index to the Times and the Periodicals Contents Index (PCI). A test release of BIOSIS is now available, and is described below. We intend to put all these test releases into full service at the end of March. In the meantime, we would very much appreciate feedback from you, whether positive or negative, to enable us to fine-tune them before they go into service.

To try out a test release: at the main EDINA menu, instead of entering 1, 2 or 3 to select BIOSIS, Palmer’s Index or PCI respectively, enter 1test, 2test, or 3test.

New features in BIOSIS test release

Information on the new features is also available via the N (News) command within BIOSIS.

Improved navigation: Changes intended to improve user navigation through the interface have been made:

• To give the interface a cleaner appearance, the amount of on-screen help information has been reduced, although it is still available via the ? (Help) command.
• The ‘0 Options, Limits’ command has been replaced by two commands: ‘0 Options’ and ‘1 Limits’.
• The Limits screen now reports the current values of all the limits.
• The P (OutPut) command screen has been redesigned.

Browsing: A ‘browsing’ facility is now available; this is perhaps the most significant improvement in this version of BIOSIS, and makes for much greater control and precision while searching the database.

When you are specifying a main search from the Search Menu, or setting a Limit, you can browse through the values indexed in the relevant field of the database records. Browsing is invoked by use of the @ symbol. For example, if you are defining an author search, specifying koh@ would result in a screen giving you an alphabetically ordered list of names in the author field starting with ‘koh’. You can then scan adjacent values, or give another browse stem to look elsewhere in the complete list of names, before choosing a name you would like to use in your search or Limit. If you give a @ symbol on its own (i.e. without any word stem), the list of values displayed is from the start of the indexed values for the author field.

Note that only one database year is examined by the browsing (see above).

Additional search syntax: When you are specifying a text string to be used in a search or as part of a Limit, you can now enclose it in square brackets, e.g. [brain research]. This implies that the string (in this case, a journal title) is intended to match a complete field value, i.e. the complete title of the journal being sought is Brain Research. The form “brain research” would merely match text within the field, and thus would also find references to Brain Research Bulletin, Experimental Brain Research, etc.

You cannot use ‘*’ with […], but if you know exactly what value you are looking for then you should use this new form, since searches are normally much faster. The […] form is used automatically when multi-word values are selected via browsing (see above).

Searching on limits: A new search option has been added to the Search Menu, allowing you to search the whole database using only the Limits which are currently switched ‘on’.

Other changes:

• Sorting of result sets, by various criteria, is now available via the O (Options) command.
• A new output option, “Document set identifier”, has been introduced.
• Limit definitions can now be ‘cleared’. Previously one could only switch a Limit ‘off’ or ‘on’ or redefine it.
• The BIOSIS start-up delay has been reduced.

In the pipeline: as these features become available they will be added to the test version of BIOSIS.

• User Preferences: the system will remember the various options and limits preferred by each user, and will set them automatically when BIOSIS is invoked.
• Accumulation of marked documents: marked documents arising from several searches will be accumulated before they are output in one go.
• The screen layout when reusing saved search queries is currently being improved.
• Improvements in the Help text structure are planned.

Please try out this version — and please let us have your comments!

Monthly Usage Statistics Now Available!

As from the end of February we will supply monthly EDINA usage statistics to all subscribing sites. In order for each site to be able to collate a complete set of figures for 1997, our first statistics mailing will include the reports for January as well as February. We are also happy to supply statistics for 1996 to any sites that require these. Please email edina@ed.ac.uk if you would like a report for 1996.

Each site will receive a monthly report with statistics relating to their institution. In the first instance, the reports will break usage figures down by dataset, department and number of sessions. In time, we also hope to add figures for both login time and CPU usage: the latter ignores ‘idle’ time, i.e. time during which a user is logged on but is not carrying out a search, output or other function. Depending on demand, we can also provide a breakdown by user category.

We intend to deliver usage statistics by email to each site representative. This will allow site representatives and administrators to read the figures into their chosen application. Should this method of delivery pose a problem to you we can also arrange to send printed reports through the post.

A sample of the proposed monthly report has been sent to the mailbox list lis-jibs-users and to all EDINA site representatives. Comments on the format and content of the proposed report are welcome.
Helen Kerr (left), Helen Strain (right) and Nicola Shields (seated) have recently joined the staff of EDINA. In addition to their other responsibilities within the User Support Team, the two Helens and Nicky will be providing helpdesk assistance, making sure that all your queries are answered quickly and efficiently.

EDINA Training 1997

We are currently planning the timetable for this year’s series of EDINA training workshops. Like last year we will offer four EDINA BIOSIS workshops (held jointly with Nigel Robinson from BIOSIS UK). We will also be offering four new workshops for the Chadwyck-Healey databases. These will be held jointly with Chadwyck-Healey, and will cover English Poetry (on CD-ROM) as well as PCI and Palmer’s Index to the Times.

If you would like to host a training session at your site, please email us at edina@ed.ac.uk

EDINA Subscription and Registration

A number of EDINA services require the completion of a licence agreement before those services can be made available to users at higher education institutions.

For 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.

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

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When I try to connect to EDINA through my web browser, clicking on “Login” gives me the message, “Application not Found.”

A: Netscape users: you must have Telnet installed on your computer. If you know that a Telnet application is already in place, it may be that Netscape doesn’t know where to find it. Look under the “Options” menu, and choose “General Preferences,” then select “Applications.” This dialogue box allows you to “Browse” so that you can locate the Telnet program. Once you have selected the Telnet application through the “Options” menu, Netscape will be able to start up a Telnet session automatically. You only have to perform this procedure once.

Other browsers will use a similar procedure, although the menu titles may be slightly different. If you need further help with getting your browser to start Telnet, consult your local computing officer.

EDINA Data & Information Access

EDINA, based at Edinburgh University Data Library, is a JISC-funded national dataset centre. 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 is required for some services.

EDINA services are:

- EDINA BIOSIS
- EDINA PCI (Periodicals Contents Index)
- EDINA Palmer’s Index to the Times
- SALSER (Scottish Academic Libraries SERials)
- UKBORDERS

Details of these services are available at http://edina.ed.ac.uk

EDINA Documentation (Prices include postage)

- EDINA BIOSIS Reference card Cost: £12/100
- EDINA PCI Reference card Cost: £12/100
- EDINA Palmer’s Index Reference card Cost: £12/100

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