

NAME OF SYSTEM:**SDI Current Awareness****ORIGINATOR:****Office of Engineering Reference****Bureau of Reclamation****Denver, Colorado 80225**

OBJECTIVE. To design and establish a system for selective dissemination of information (SDI) to members of the Bureau's Engineering and Research Center in order to increase the staff's opportunity for obtaining significant literature on subjects of interest.

BACKGROUND. The Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining multipurpose water resources projects in the Western United States. A vital element in the success of these efforts is the Engineering and Research Center at Denver, Colo. Its Office of Engineering is responsible for keeping abreast of the technical literature in the broad field of water resource investigation. Among the office's many functions is that of developing improved methods for alerting the staff and field personnel to meaningful literature. To better satisfy this objective, the Office of Engineering Reference several years ago established an SDI system for staff and field engineers, specialists, and management personnel.

THE NEW METHOD. This system evolves around the matching of an individual's fields of interest descriptors (indexing terms) with descriptors that have been assigned to individual documents acquired by the Office of Engineering Reference.

Each document selected for possible inclusion in the SDI system is first scanned by an engineer or scientist whose job assignment concerns that specific subject matter area. Professional library personnel index the articles in depth, abstract the essential information, and compile the necessary bibliographic data. The information is then converted to magnetic tape format for entry into the computer's SDI matching program.

A thesaurus wordlist specially developed for this purpose is used for indexing both the employee interest profiles (subject areas of interest to them) and the documents. The list contains about 3,300 descriptors representing the Bureau's point of view on all aspects of water resources development. When a new document is entered into the system, the Bureau's computer compares the list of descriptors describing individual user interests with those assigned the document. As matches occur, the computer prepares lists of individuals who are likely to be interested in the selected document. Abstracts of the documents are then automatically disseminated to them. A response card is enclosed with the abstract for completion by the recipient as to the accuracy of the match. This feedback of information allows for appropriate adjustments that are intended to improve the user's profile selections by eliminating literature of little interest. In filling out this response card the recipient also indicates how useful the information was and whether he wants the complete document.

REMARKS. Through feedback of the recipient's response cards, the effectiveness of the SDI system can be constantly evaluated. Where the response cards indicate that the information is pertinent, it is clear that the matching profiles seem to function satisfactorily. Where they indicate that the information should be more pertinent, the system may need to be improved or expanded. As changes occur in a recipient's interests, feedback to the system causes his profile card to be updated. Thus, the users are reasonably assured that documents relating to their job assignments will be brought to their attention, and they, at the same time, are relieved of the time-consuming, tedious chore of having to personally assemble and scan the enormous volume of documents being produced today.

The computer program includes a program technique that gives relative weight to both user profile and document abstract descriptors. This feature tends to eliminate less relevant matches and assures a more meaningful selection of abstracts. The document index file can also be used in the normal manner for conducting retrospective searches upon request of the users.

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