



FIZ CHEMIE BERLIN

Fachinformationszentrum Chemie GmbH

The Managing Director of FIZ CHEMIE Berlin warns of the loss of current research findings through technical and organisational loopholes in documentation and the information supply chain / Call for an alliance of information generators, specialist firms and institutions, libraries and information centres / Modernising of the knowledge production process offers new opportunities to transfer research knowledge to the workplace with greater speed

Deplanque suggests an alliance in Germany to improve the supply of scientific information

Berlin, 16th August 2006 - With a call for an alliance to permanently secure and improve the provision of specialist digital information, Professor Dr. René Deplanque warns of the impending loss of current research data through technical and organisational loopholes in the information supply chain. The Managing Director of the German specialist information centre, FIZ CHEMIE Berlin, simultaneously indicates that modernising of the knowledge production process offers the best opportunities for the improved and accelerated transfer of scientific research knowledge to the workplace. He challenges research in Germany involving information generators, scientific societies, libraries and information centres to form a cooperative alliance to promote the permanent security of digital information, improving its provision and optimising its application to generate knowledge.

“We must adapt the excellent structures and networks existing in Germany to meet the latest demands, and cooperate to create a supply of information that addresses the requirements of modern working techniques in the area of research. Modernising of the knowledge production process offers the best opportunity for transferring research knowledge to the workplace with greater speed”, says Deplanque. A circuit network must be organised that draws in all research aspects from information generation to workplaces that yield economic profits through innovative production and, in turn, generate funds for further research.

As a background to his challenge, Deplanque declares that “digital techniques for creating and utilising research findings are developing so rapidly, that even a simple change in memory technology can now lead to the irrecoverable loss of large quantities of important information. This must be prevented through suitable organisational and technical measures. Digital technology simultaneously provides the best opportunity to generate information for new research and development approaches from existing know-how in an efficient and speedy manner, in part automatically through the use of efficient software. Other options for optimising the knowledge production process can be found in the mass availability of digitally-generated information. Valuable research findings, such as experimental data, simulations or good algorithms, have to date only been available to a small circle of researchers, but it is now, in principle, possible to duplicate these in an infinite manner and, in combination with efficient processing tools, provide them to an unlimited number of people at all times for further research and development purposes. This offers enormous potential for the acceleration of research progress and technology transfer. These opportunities should be exploited more effectively than is presently the case.” Deplanque points out that the preservation of knowledge gained during research and promotion of its accessibility in the best possible form are tasks of extreme importance for all of society. He believes that researchers, as information generators, scientific societies and institutions, as their representatives, libraries, as traditional documentation organisations for existing knowledge, and information centres and creators of databases, as those with experience in structuring and standardising complex information, should all pull together to solve this problem.

Background: In addition to the transfer of experience from person to person, the printed word represented the

absolute ultimate in information media for centuries. It has in no way lost its importance today. Libraries have for some years been digitalising existing printed material on a grand scale to make it accessible to anybody interested via network technologies.

In addition to this, researchers have been employing computers on a massive level in their work for some time now. Many experiments, simulations, comparisons and evaluations of enormous information quantities are only possible with computer support. Computer technology is employed to procure information, for computations and to establish new relationships between existing information, along with the automatic calculation of new knowledge gained through research. Documentation and information specialists expect that more than 70 percent of scientific information will only be available in digital form in the near future, because it is generated in this form and its documenting on paper is extremely difficult or even impossible.

Questions relating to the long-term preservation of digital information, which standards are necessary to enable its exchange and who bears responsibility for ensuring the availability of knowledge gained through research, both today and in the future, have not yet been sufficiently addressed.

For additional Information

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About FIZ CHEMIE Berlin

FIZ CHEMIE Berlin, is a state-supported non-profit information agency financed by the Federal Government and the Governments of the German States whose primary task is to provide high-quality information services concerning chemistry, chemical engineering and related fields to science, education and industry. It is certified according to the DIN EN ISO 9001:2000 quality standard. FIZ CHEMIE Berlin maintains close relationships with research and information institutions in Germany and abroad and has marketing agreements with partner organisations worldwide. The Centre is committed to the further development and the linking of national and international chemistry information. FIZ CHEMIE Berlin is a member of the Germany's Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Science Association (Leibniz-Gemeinschaft).

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