

# INTERNATIONAL INDEX TO FILM/TELEVISION PERIODICALS

6 Nottingham Street, London W1M 3RB tel: (0)171 224 0991 fax: (0)171 224 1203

Editor's Report

April 95

## 1. Software upgrade

During the last six months our computer program has been upgraded to a more advanced version. Since the television database is so much smaller than the film we chose to convert that first. Now film has also been done and we have successfully output data both for the microfiche service and for the CD-ROM. The data inputting process is actually slower than before but since the new system checks the headings and establishes indexes while it is working, the overall accuracy and efficiency is much improved.

Also the first of the backlog of annual volumes (1982) has been keyboarded and incorporated onto the database, and will be on the May CD-ROM.

## 2. Computer

This work has been hampered by the limitations of our present computer, especially the 250 MB hard disk. We could of course fit a larger disk, but we would also benefit from a faster processor. This would reduce the waiting time now experienced while inputting data (adding up to at least half an hour in a day), and ease the problem of running processes involving the whole database, which mean that we sometimes have to leave the computer on overnight. Our database is already large, and we look forward to the time when indexing from the 1972-81 volumes is added, another 90-100 MB. I have therefore added the sum of £1400 to the budget for a new computer. Our present computer is just over two and a half years old.

## 3. Previous indexing

As already mentioned the 1982 volume has been added to the Index. 1979 and 1981 are both about half finished. Other 'volunteers' able to do this work are not forthcoming, consequently since last July I have been investigating the possibilities of a keyboarding service taking over the inputting of the remaining back volumes. The first company I approached was Innodata, who use workers in the Phillipines. Their estimate was \$1.6 per thousand characters, which meant the cost of the job would be about £16000.

A British firm declined to quote because they could not compete with this figure, but they recommended a company operating in Jamaica. The estimate of this company is £0.875 per thousand, plus £500 set up fee. Bearing in mind the more favourable rate of the dollar to the pound now, this works out to around £9000. However the work is done one would have to add a sum for the data conversion by Richard Begernie, our computer expert (say £1000).

It is also worth mentioning that the data must be proofread very carefully, especially the general subject headings, which have evolved considerably

over the years. It would be impracticable for our existing staff to take on this extra work in an acceptable time period.

#### 4. Budget

Costs of developing and producing the CD-ROM mean that once again we cannot break even without help from FIAF. Nevertheless the future is I think very promising. There has never been such interest in our work.

Income from CD-ROM subscriptions is based on sales of 110 in 1995 and 175 in 1996. Some allowance has been made for subscribers to the annual volume switching to the CD-ROM.

The estimated expenditure for the Open University in 1995 and 1996 includes £3000 each year for additional databases or improvements to the program. It is assumed that we shall cease producing the microfiches in 1996.

#### 5. CD-ROM subscriptions

We now have 71 subscribers to the CD-ROM service, of which 20 are FIAF members. We sent out renewal invoices last month and several institutions have renewed their microfiche subscriptions so I guess we shall continue this service for another year.

The price of the CD-ROM subscription is \$450 or £2~~50~~<sup>95</sup>. It has been suggested that this price is too high, though no one has yet told me what they think the price should be. We would certainly sell some more subscriptions if the price were lower, but would it be enough? If the price were halved would we sell more than twice as many, or if it were reduced to a quarter (\$112.50) would we sell four times as many? I have my doubts. Bookshops are not interested in stocking the annual volume and to my knowledge no private citizen has ever bought it; I think very few would buy our CD-ROM, and those that did would not I think take out a subscription.

Our disk is not entertainment, it is not Cinemania, it is information and will only sell to those who need the information, and to them it is good value. In comparison to other bibliographical CD-ROMs it is a bargain. The Music Index costs £690 (\$1120) for an annual disk. The Humanities Index costs £1079, the Art Index costs £1246. The latter two are quarterly, published by H.W.Wilson, a huge company which specialises in this sort of thing, and should know what it is doing. There would be a serious danger in putting too low a price on our disk, since quality is not expected to be cheap.

Bibliographies are expensive to compile and they will never sell to the general public, but only to university libraries, large public libraries and specialised organisations. There are a limited number of these and to achieve maximum sales we have to make sure that they all hear about us. During the last two weeks we have had three orders and several enquiries from the USA, from institutions that we have not heard from before. This must be the result of the leaflets we have sent out, and augurs well, but we must have more publicity.