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IAC Acquires Harfax Database

World-wide business market targeted, says Goldstein

Information Access Company (IAC), a division of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company that specializes in supplying literature retrieval aids to libraries and businesses, acquired the publishing assets of Harfax Database Publishing from Harper & Row effective February 1. Financial terms of the agreement were not released.

IAC has purchased the rights to the *Industry Data Sources* database published by Harfax online and in the form

of printed directories and guides, but will be renaming the file after a period of transition because it is too closely associated with the Harper & Row identification.

(Editor's note: The Harfax database, which covers statistical information from 65 key industries, was reviewed by columnist Greg Payne in the March issue of *Information Today*.)

According to IAC President Morris Goldstein, the Harfax operation will

move to IAC headquarters in Belmont, California, probably in May. Harfax's Louis Piccarèllo is acting general manager of the project, and several other Harfax employees will be integrated into the staff at IAC.

In commenting on the acquisition, Goldstein said, "We expect to make Harfax the cornerstone of an effort by IAC to substantially increase its business-type information, especially international business. Harfax has been

adding about 3,000 abstracts a month, and we expect to triple or quadruple that number and to add more sources. We're also looking at the possibility of marketing a microform product.

"This is a good expansion for IAC," he said, "and we're very optimistic about it."

Goldstein assured that there would be no interruption in either online access or orders for print titles.

For further information, contact Blodwen Tarter, vice president of marketing, Information Access Company, 11 Davis Dr., Belmont, CA 94002. (Phone: 800-227-8431 or 415-591-2333)

Online Classroom: Fertile Ground for Farm Students

The nation's first online agricultural classroom, which is expected to be fully operational by September 1984, is in the



Pergamon Enhances Patent Searching, Adds Mini File

Pergamon International has recently announced three major enhancements to its InfoLine service for online patent

searching. They are: new specialized So our reasoning was to select areas of high interest to companies who make a good market for us—such as computers, telecommunications, robotics, and laser

Database Review

HARFAX—Moving West

by Greg Payne

One of the most underrated databases on the scene today is Harfax. Started as a top management playtoy venture at Harper & Row, and always poorly positioned and directed from the corporate level, this database and all its print product running mates are now owned by Ziff-Davis and will be part of the IAC stable out of Belmont, California.

Users of both the print products (we'll run down the list shortly) and the online database contacted for this column had nothing but good to say about the results they achieved with Harfax (the name of the database will change soon).

For example, John R. Kaufman, for many years the director of the N.W. Ayer Information Center (AIC), and now the president of Help Business Services in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, has had direct experience with the *Directory of Industry Data Sources* for both the U.S. and Western European markets.

"We had to report on the European organizations and operations of six of the Fortune 100 companies on a country-by-country basis. The sources we found in the Harfax directory gave us 100 percent satisfaction of the search query," reported Kaufman.

Kaufman also said that another question dealing with the U.S. market

for "value added frozen poultry for a major fast food industry client" was successfully answered in a very short time.

"The Harfax directories (and online database) are the single best source of marketing research facts I have encountered in my career," said Kaufman, who is known as one not given to hyperbole.

Worth watching

Now for some facts on Harfax.

Harfax was (until late February at least) comprised of five print product services and the online database available through four vendors. What it will be like under a new corporate leadership that understands its markets much better will be worth watching.

The five current print services from Harfax are:

- *Directory of Industry Data Sources: U.S. and Canada* (3 vol. \$225)
- *Directory of Industry Data Sources: Western Europe* (2 vol. \$125)
- *Guide to High Tech Industries* (\$65)
- *Guide to Energy Industries* (\$65)
- *Guide to Industry Special Issues* (\$65)

The database—available on BRS,

(continued on page 27)

SAMPLE HARFAX RECORD ON BRS

AN 80-002504. 8110.

TI STUDY ON HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE MARKETS, 1980-1986: THE COMING ROLE OF HIGH-MOLECULAR-WEIGHT POLYETHYLENE.

PB PETER SHERWOOD ASSOCIATES, INC.

PA 60 E. 42ND ST.
NEW YORK, NY USA 10017.

TE (212)687-3653.

PD NOVEMBER 1981.

CO PRICE: \$7,000.00.

LG EN.

RS SECONDARY SOURCE.

PT MKTR.

SI 52821.

PN PLASTICS MATERIALS AND RESINS.

II PLASTICS.

GC USA.

DE MARKET-ANALYSIS, 1980-1986. PRICES. FOREIGN-TRADE. END-USES. PLANT-CAPACITY. FORECASTS, 1980-1986.

AB MULTI-CLIENT MARKET STUDY ON THE HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE MARKETS (1980-1986), INCLUDING GENERAL MARKET ANALYSIS (1980-1986), FOREIGN TRADE, RESIN GRADES, HDPE PRICE STRUCTURE, RESIN PLANT CAPACITIES AND PROCESSES EMPLOYED AND ANALYSIS OF MARKETS BY END USE. APPROXIMATELY 400-600 FIELD CONTRACTS WITH CONVERTERS, RESIN PRODUCERS, END USERS, PRODUCERS OF COMPETITIVE MATERIALS, MACHINE MANUFACTURERS, COMPANIES WITH PERIPHERAL INTERESTS AND PERTINENT TRADE ASSOCIATIONS ARE INVOLVED.

Database Review

(continued from page 16)

Data-Star, Dialog, and Nexis—now carries about 65,000 records. The file is updated monthly on each vendor with about 2,200 to 2,400 new records.

The Harfax file covers directory and statistical information from 65 key industries found in a wide range of publications including periodicals, monographs, research reports, government publications, handbooks and year-books, and many more. As with most files, the online version of Harfax allows users much more current information and many more search entry points and logical combinations to work with on any search.

As the BRS sample accompanying this column shows, the records are straight forward and clearly tagged so that "even an end user" can easily read and understand each entry. Searchers can use the industry terms, SIC codes (entered to the fourth digit), and other combinations of controlled or free text words and terms in searching.

The problem of finding or acquiring the full text of documents cited in Harfax is alleviated by the inclusion of the publisher's name and address in each record. Over time, older records might be difficult to trace, but reports from users indicate they are largely successful in tracking down items they need from searches. Of course, it would be nice to have the material available online or in a readily available fiche library (does this second like IAC?) so that the statistics could be retrieved quickly. This is the type of information end users have been known to need "two hours ago."

In the nearly two years Harfax has been online, corporate special libraries have emerged as the file's single largest

group of users. Most users are librarians or information specialists in these centers who conduct research for clients in a company. Consultant and information brokers make up another significant user segment of the file (people like Kaufman) who find the file answers questions quickly and effectively. Government agencies at all levels are also finding Harfax useful. Academic and public libraries are buying the print products more than the online version, however.

Westward ho

Harfax will move from the Cambridge, Massachusetts, quarters it has shared with Ballinger Publishing Company (another Harper & Row subsidiary) to California in the near future. Ann Fernald, the operational soul and glue of Harfax since its inception, will not stay with the company when it moves west. She is joining Thomson & Thomson to direct their database operations effective March 19th.

The "bottom line" is that Harfax is a very effective database that deserves more attention from market researchers and industry tracking specialists. It is different enough from its main competitor, Predicasts, to make it a worthwhile stop in most market-related or industry specific searches. The difference in coverage makes it more complimentary than duplicative of Predicasts.

Greg Payne heads GHP Consulting of Springfield, Virginia. He specializes in database development and marketing and in negotiating online host system contracts for database producers. Mr. Payne has been in the online database business for 14 years and was the founder of the ABI/INFORM database.