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DATABASES FOR SCIENCE IN POLAND

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Abstract: Development of databases for science in Poland in the last years and the role of KBN are shown. The first conference devoted to that subject INFOBAZY'97 organized in Gdansk last June is briefly discussed.

1. The role of KBN

KBN — State Committee for Scientific Research — plays crucial role in promoting development of informatic infrastructure for Polish science. In 1993 and 1995 the "Program of Development of Informatic Infrastructure", which defines the main priorities, was revised and accepted. One may read that document under the address: *http://www.kbn.gov.pl* . Since 1995, after building basic technical infrastructure, the most important seems to be the accessibility of informatic services. Therefore, one of the basic priorities is the development of databases for science. There are several conditions — a financed database must be accessible from the network, there should be real scientific interest of the institution involved reflected by cofinancing (50%), the results of using public money must be clearly evidenced.

The response for call of proposals for development of databases was very high — in 1995 — 165 applications with only accepted, due to the limited amount of money, and in following years 1996, 1997 respectively 160 and 133 applications and 45 and 55 acceptances.

Looking to applications the highest interest is in financing library systems, which was not the main priority in KBN. Therefore, a lot of library systems are still under development with no substantial help from KBN although the situation is slowly changing and in 1997 that group was already significant.

In 1998, contrary to general financial situation in science where the dominant is the cut of investment money by 30%, the development of databases is preserved, as one may notice increase of that budget exceeding the inflation rate.

2. INFOBAZY'97

INFOBAZY'97 — Databases for Science" was the conference organized on 23–25 June 1997 at the Technical University of Gdansk devoted to summarise the development in that field. We may declare that this was a real need as the interest in that conference was very high, the content of presented papers very interesting and of high quality, the atmosphere of discussions warm and full of inspirations and finally the proceedings containing 570 pages were very well issued.

There were several plenary papers devoted to the state of the art in the field of scientific databases in Poland (Daniłowicz, Niezgódka), legal and proprietary aspects in the light of present and future regulations (Barta, Markiewicz), as well as technical issues concerning architectures of modern database systems (Goczyła).

There were several professional sessions such as: natural sciences, economy and administration, geographic information systems, chemistry and technology, medicine and culture, libraries, information about science, tools for databases and finally reports of databases financed by KBN.

The full content of the conference proceedings is available in Internet: *http://www.task.gda.pl/infobazy*. Additionally, as the result of that conference KBN decided to finance a special database devoted to databases for science in Poland, which is in operation at TASK Centre — *http://infobaza.task.gda.pl*. It should also be underlined that the best library of commercial scientific databases is available in ICM in Warsaw — *http://www.icm.edu.pl*.

3. This issue

Selected papers presented at INFOBAZY'97 are published in that issue of TASK QUARTERLY. Mainly local presentations heve been chosen, as the main interest of our journal is to present results of work related to our Centre.

As the situation of database "market" in Poland is changing rapidly we have decided not to make any evaluations; also the legal aspects seem to be better absorbable in the original Polish text; therefore only the technical presentation of Goczyła "The Architecture of Modern Database Systems" is published here.

The biggest amount of information is already in libraries therefore the most characteristic elements of library systems are presented — Czerminski talking about VTLS, the system chosen by most advanced Polish university libraries, Zięborak — showing his own product of TUG — APIS and Kwapich, who discusses the problems of computer patent databases. A very specific product — the first "artistic" multimedia database developed in the Academy of Music is presented by Regent and Szwoch.

The other huge field of well developed databases are natural sciences and chemistry. Some problems of chemical reactions retrieval systems are discussed by Hippe.

As specific, related to GIS issues, the presentation of representatives of Polish Geological Institute and Institute of Hydro-Engineering PAS are shown. Finally, not a database but a concept how to solve a city emergency system is discussed.