

The Synoptic—A New Form of Archive Journal Publication

THE AIAA Publications Committee, in an effort to improve the efficiency of technical communications, has endorsed the introduction of Synoptics into the archive journal publication structure. Beginning in 1971, there will appear in each of the archive journals a special "Synoptics" section, along with the present sections of full papers, Technical or Engineering Notes, and Technical Comments. This new section probably will incorporate perforated tear-out pages, thereby allowing the subscriber to extract and file Synoptics of specific interest separately from the full journal.

The concept of the Synoptic was suggested by Dr. Benjamin Pinkel, and the rules for its implementation were evolved by a subcommittee of the Publications Committee consisting of Dr. Pinkel (chairman), Holt Ashley, Norman Fishman, and Edward Price. The Synoptic is a presentation, limited to a *single journal* page, of the important information in a technical paper, in a form which permits quick comprehension and proper application by the reader without recourse to the full paper.

The need for the Synoptic publication format has developed from the following requirements:

- 1) to keep the AIAA member abreast of the rising flood of information in his field of specialization and in related fields.
- 2) to provide for convenient storage of that information for future use.
- 3) to expedite literature searches in a given field.
- 4) to aid program managers and others with broad interests to scan a wide field of information with maximum effectiveness.
- 5) to reduce the time and cost of transmitting key information to the AIAA reader.

Synoptics will be prepared by the authors of all papers submitted for publication to the AIAA archive journals (and possibly, certain organizational reports of a key nature). All synoptics will be reviewed, along with the papers, as part of the standard review process. The journal Editors may select, on the basis of their own and reviewers' opinions, one of three alternatives: a) both the full article *and* the Synoptic should be published, b) *only* the Synoptic should be published, the full paper being made available by request to the author, c) neither the article *nor* the Synoptic should be published. The criteria for total rejection (alternative c) shall remain as they are at present: outside the journal scopes, technical errors, or insufficient advance over prior literature. The criterion for publication of only the Synoptic (alternative b) shall be that the full paper is incremental in content; i.e., that the author adds *valuable* information to a subject

already receiving attention in the literature, or presents *useful* scientific or engineering information which entails no concepts or methods requiring full-paper format for their presentation.

The decision on publication of the Synoptic, as in the case of the full paper, rests with the Editor-in-Chief and the appropriate Associate Editor, who usually will base their decisions to a large extent on the reviewers' comments. Should the Editors' decision be to accept the Synoptic, but not the full paper, the author has the prerogative of selecting one of three courses of action: 1) Reject AIAA publication of both the paper and the Synoptic and seek publication elsewhere; 2) accept AIAA publication of the Synoptic and seek publication of the full paper elsewhere, or 3) accept AIAA publication of the Synoptic and *not* seek further publication of the full paper.

The positive aspects of Synoptic-format publication, from the author's point of view, are as follows:

- 1) Because it is a concise presentation of the key findings of the author's work, it will almost certainly attract wider distribution and *readership* than would the more complex and difficult full-paper presentation.
- 2) Because it will appear in a special "Synoptics" section of the appropriate journal, it will be brought to the attention of project managers and administrators who normally do not have the time to read highly specialized full technical articles.
- 3) Because the review process for Synoptics can be accelerated, they will be printed earlier than the full paper could be.
- 4) Because the Synoptics *will* be reviewed, just as full papers are, they will possess a scientific/engineering stature beyond that of Technical or Engineering Notes, which are *not* subject to the full review procedure.
- 5) They will be accorded full archival status (denoted as "Synoptics" in their titles), for referencing and bibliographic purposes.

In order to evaluate the attractions of the Synoptic to both authors and readers, samples of Synoptics (together with the full papers will be published in several journal issues during the balance of 1970, starting with the August issues).

Your comments on the value and effectiveness of Synoptics, and the procedures outlined for preparing and processing them, are sincerely solicited. Please communicate with me, or with any of the editors or members of the Publications Committee. We will look forward to receiving your response to this innovation in AIAA archive-journal publications, both at this time and after you have had an opportunity to examine the sample Synoptics which will appear in the coming months.

Jerry Grey
Vice-President, Publications