BOOK REVIEWS

How to Find Chemical Information: A Guide for Practicing Chemists, Educators, and Students

By Robert E. Maizell, Wiley-Interscience, New York, 2nd ed., 1987, 402 pp., $44.95.

This handy and very readable book does an excellent job of providing researchers, students, and academicians with a practical approach to chemical literature. The second edition, published eight years after the first edition, includes new chapters on the history of Chemical Abstracts, government information resources and services, analytical chemistry sources, and a summary discussion of major trends in the field of chemical information. The chapter on patents includes a wealth of information on both U.S. and foreign patents and their new access tools. Significant chapters on encyclopedias, handbooks, Chemical Abstracts, and other index and abstracting services provide an evaluative look at major chemistry sources. The growing area of chemical safety, including environmental factors, is addressed, and key agencies and other information sources are discussed. Chemical marketing, business, and processing information resources relevant to today's economic perspective are brought up-to-date in this edition.

This book also incorporates the changes in chemical literature searching brought about by automation, with computer-readable versions evaluated along with the print counterparts, and not exclusively in the chapters on online searching. Maizell acknowledges the need for fast information sources available to all chemists, especially those away from large research collections, by identifying key contacts and listing their addresses (and often phone numbers) at the end of the appropriate chapter. Despite the changes in access to information, the book emphasizes fundamental methods and principles chemists and engineers use to develop realistic search strategies to cope with the continual growth of published materials. I would recommend this book to students as a valuable and pragmatic introduction to chemical literature. I have used it as a sourcebook to jog my memory for jumbled book titles. This book should be a welcome addition to any chemist's bookshelf.

Laura M. Osegueda
Head of Chemistry Library
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

From CA to CAS Online

By Hedda Schulz, translated by Elizabeth Mole, VCH Publishers, 1988, 227 pp

This book provides an excellent overview of the Chemical Abstracts Service's publications and online resources for the new chemistry student, beginning online searcher, and instructors of chemical information courses. The purpose of the text is to provide the background information necessary to tap into the "unconscious search strategy" used during a manual search of Chemical Abstracts (CA), in order to perform effective CAS ONLINE searches. According to Ms. Schulz, the foundation of good online search strategies is a knowledge of the contents, organization, and indexing policies of the printed CA. The first five chapters are a thorough introduction to CA in print. Chapter 1 provides a very brief history of Chemical Abstracts and information on how an abstract is created. Chapter 2 is devoted to the structure and organization of CA. Sample questions are included which illustrate the use of the Index Guide, CA Issue and Volume Indexes, CA Collective Indexes, CAS Source Index (CASSI), Registry Handbooks, and the Ring Systems Handbook. These examples include a discussion of different search techniques and could be used in courses and workshops. The chapter does a very good job in explaining some of the idiosyncracies found within CA, including its nomenclature rules and inversion of names to provide access to chemicals according to parent compounds. Chapter 3 discusses the use of the CAS Source Index (CASSI) to find source documents, as well as English translations. The Registry Handbooks and their usefulness in finding CA registry numbers for chemicals and in tracking any changes in numbers over time, is covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is an introduction to the Ring Systems Handbook. Chapters 3 through 5 also include search examples. Chapters 6 through 10 move into the field of computers. Chapter 6 provides an introduction to the different computer-readable services available from Chemical Abstracts Service. Chapter 7 reviews the necessary equipment and online services offering access to the databases introduced in the previous chapter. Chapter 8 is an updated and revised extract from H. R. Pichler's book, *Online-Recherchen fuer Chemiker,* and is a practical, simplified guide to searching the CAS ONLINE system, available through STN. The last two chapters are a useful discussion of the advantages/disadvantages of both manual and online searching of CA resources.

In summary, the book is very thorough and practical in scope. It stands well alone, as an introductory text, but would also be useful as a quick reference guide kept by a terminal or near printed copies of Chemical Abstracts. The search strategy exercises are well selected to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of the various indexes and search features found in both the print and online versions of CA.

Laura M. Osegueda
Head of Chemistry Library
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720