

*From CA to CAS ONLINE* by Hedda Schulz. VCH, Weinheim, 1988, pp. 227, DM 56.00. ISBN 0-89573-815-5.

One of the major revolutions in the art of doing chemistry, in recent times, is the ability to search the chemical literature in a facile manner from a microcomputer connected via a modem to a telephone line. Moreover, at least for academia, the cost of this search can be quite low as a consequence of the special fiscal arrangements which can often be made.

An efficient search of the literature using a Chemical Abstracts database is usually, however, a procedure markedly different from a manual search in the library. There is quite an art in describing one's search so as to "hit" useful references and exclude large numbers of useless references—one must also design the search so that one does not miss useful references. In general, one learns this by reading the associated software manuals and by experience. This book provides a more rapid approach to generating a well-defined search.

It begins by explaining in considerable detail the kind of information which the Chemical Abstracts service provides, and then showing how this can be used manually for a variety of different example searches in the library. The book then proceeds to explain the various options which are available ONLINE, with many examples, and displays these by carrying out the previous manual searches using the computer. It is very evident that a different procedure is used. Essentially all the different kinds of search (available when the book was written) are illustrated.

This book is a valuable adjunct to those of us who now routinely do our searches by computer prior to going to the library to look up the results of our search.

The Editor's Desk