MANUAL FOR A
SPORTS INFORMATION CENTRE

VERSION IN ENGLISH
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PREFACE

We have been told about the history of Olympism and sport through books and documents from pasteras, which have been preserved for our enjoyment.

The cultural heritage that the International Olympic Committee takes pride in exhibiting, both at the Olympic Museum library and at the Olympic Studies and Research Centre, is based on books and documents written by well-informed people, enabling us today to retrace history right back to Antiquity.

The founder of the International Olympic Committee, Pierre de Coubertin, was the first to record the history of our organization. An educationalist and a gifted writer, Pierre de Coubertin bequeathed us literature which, a century later, is still used as reference material in Olympic education.

This is precisely why we encourage all the National Olympic Committees to establish an information and documentation centre for the preservation of their sporting and Olympic heritage. Within this precise framework, we requested the cooperation of the International Association for Sports Information (IASI) to put together a Sports Information Centre Manual.

I would like to pay tribute to the IASI for its close collaboration and express my sincere thanks to the authors, Mrs Nerida Clarke, Mr José Antonio Aquesolo, Mr Jean-Paul Niquet and Mr Alain Poncet, who also coordinated the project, for their devotion to this task. Many thanks also to the translators, Mrs Myriam Elle and Mrs Carmen Garcia.

We hope that the NOCs will make good use of this manual, thus providing researchers and journalists from their respective countries with documents and information which will be helpful to them in their work.

Juan Antonio SAMARANCH
Marqués de Samaranch
IOC President

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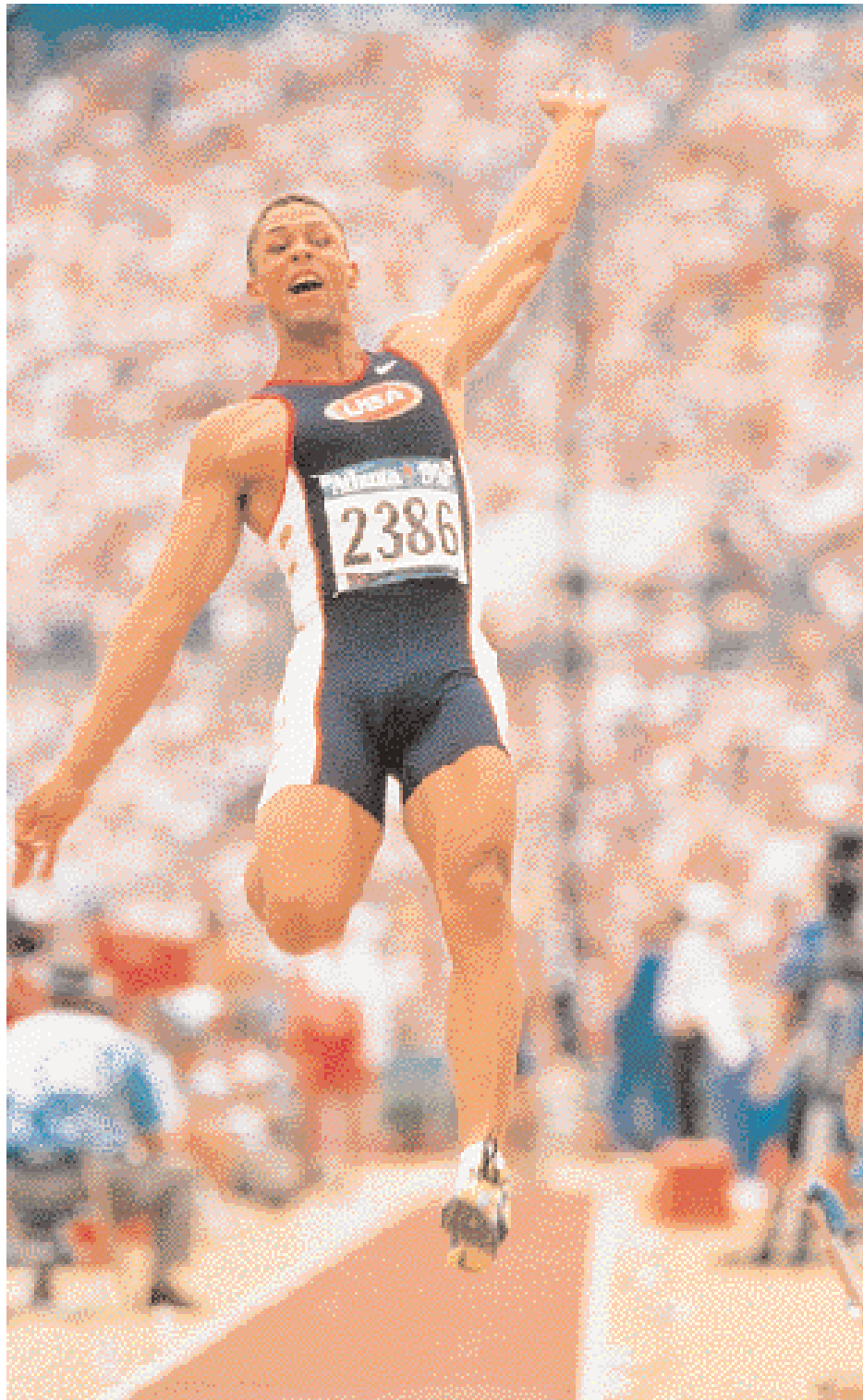
INTRODUCTION

For some time now it has been felt that an easy to read and non technical publication on the topic of the establishment and henceforth management of a sports information centre, was long overdue. In this regard it is especially developing countries who have expressed a need for some guidelines on how to start and operate such a centre bearing in mind that expertise and know-how in this field of sport are not always readily available.

This publication has been prepared by the International Association for Sports Information with the aim of bringing together the collective expertise and experiences of its members to present to the reader the broad concepts of sport information management. The manual also aims to provide practical guidelines for the delivery of sport information services in all parts of the world.

IASI has tried to present the manual in easy to read language and every effort has been made to avoid lengthy and complicated jargon. The first part of the manual outlines the key concepts related to the organisation of information centres and the second part contains recommendations for the creation of a sport information centre. It should however be noted that information management in the field of sport is becoming increasingly complex and that there is an increasing requirement for professional education in this field. This manual should be seen as a starting point for those interested in managing sport information and not a substitute for formal education in information management where those opportunities are available.

It is to be hoped that this manual will in some way contribute to the development of sport information centres in those countries that are anxious to establish their own centres. It is also hoped that these countries will in the future become part of the International Association for Sports Information, a sporting association that enjoys international recognition as the premier body for professionals working in sport information services.

Nerida CLARKE
IASI President

Note for the reader
The bibliography presented at the end of this Manual has been choosen by the authors from criterias of accessibility and universality concerning the choosen books.
Theses books are referenced with a number between [ ] in the full text.
The reader could be send to the Glossary at the end of the Manual to find the meaning of the major concepts presented and items used in the Manual.

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PART 1st

KEY CONCEPTS

RELATED

TO THE ORGANISATION

OF SPORT INFORMATION

CENTRES

1.1 THE RAW MATERIAL:

THE INFORMATION

At the beginning of this manual it is important to explain what is meant by information and to explain the relationship between information, documents and information management and documentation.

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This manual has as its focus sport information, however the principles that we apply to the management of sport information are the same as those, which would be applied to the management of information in any subject area.

As a starting point it should be understood that information as such does not exist in its own right. It is in fact a medium for knowledge only in a context and when it is received by someone who is able to understand and exploit it. Without information there can be no accumulation of knowledge and without knowledge that is applied in a practical way then there is unlikely to be progress. Increasingly in sport, information and the subsequent transference of knowledge is essential for there to be progress at all levels of sport.

In general information requires a medium to express itself in the material world and this medium is a document which can be in a variety of formats. A document may be a book, a journal, a pamphlet, a poster, a microfilm, a computer disc, a photographic, a videotape or an electronic file (see Chapter 1.3 for further descriptions of these formats). Information and documents cannot be separated; there is no information without any document and no document without any information. Better still, we accede to the information thanks to the document.

It is the business of those involved in the management of sport information to manage these varied documents and the information contained within them so that they become a source of knowledge to those who are involved in sport (the information users). The

terminology describing information specialists who manage documents in all their formats varies in different parts of the world. In North America and many English speaking countries the terms «librarian» and «documentalist» are synonymous however in some parts of the world «librarians» and «documentalists» are considered as separate disciplines.

In summary it can be said that the role of the sport information specialist or documentalist is to:

- ■ identify and organise the information needs of people who want sport information,

- ■ identify and organise sources of information which are relevant to those user needs, expressed or latent

- ■ facilitate access to that information in whatever format for the person who needs it

- ■ Actively promote and disseminate the availability of information related to sport.

Users of sport information can be individuals or groups of people and their information needs will vary greatly depending on their personal backgrounds and the purpose for which they need the information.
It is the function of an information service put very simply: to operate as the mediator between a user searching for information and the documentary sources ('reservoirs', networks) which will contain the information to be used.

In dealing with sport information we are managing the body of knowledge that covers all aspects of sport from theory to practice and includes multimedia information, data and published sources of information. Broadly speaking sport information could be categorised into the following broad categories

however these categories are not mutually exclusive and from time to time users may find a need for information from several different categories in order to satisfy their needs:

■ the scientific and technical information which meets the needs of researchers and technicians,

■ the professional information which is useful in the practice of a profession. It includes the previous types information and also economics, legal and social information,

■ general public information which meets the needs of a large public, with factual information or popular information.

In concluding this introductory chapter it is important to remind ourselves of the important role which information plays in the universal society.

■ First, it is a prerequisite to economic and social progress, since it favours the innovation and the increase of productivity and national wealth,

■ Second, it reduces the uncertainty. This naturally improves decision-making, which, by successive choices, will determine the future of a sector or an activity,

■ Finally, thanks to educational actions, it contributes to a general increase of the level of knowledge and qualification, essential to the expansion of our modern societies.

Information is an essential part of any endeavour today and information is increasingly becoming a strategic resource for organisations of all sizes. Within organisations there is an increasing need for specialized information services which provide efficient services and

deliver to users of information the products which fulfil their needs.

1.2 INFORMATION

USERS

The people who use sport information use it in many different ways depending on their specialisation and interest in sport and depending on when they need the information and for what purpose, therefore it is difficult to identify the «typical» sport information user.

The people who use sport information use it in many different ways depending on their specialisation and interest in sport and depending on when they need the information and for what purpose, therefore it is difficult to identify the «typical» sport information user. The sort of information needed and used by a sports scientist to do his or her job may be very different from the information needed and used by a sports policy maker working in sporting facilities. However from time to time there will be occasions when these people who have diverse jobs in the sports industry find a need to use the same sort of information. For example a directory of sporting organisations might be used to meet a common information need to locate a sporting organisation.

Having said this, it is possible to identify some broad categories of information users and to list some of the types of information these users may require. It should be recognised that there is always likely to be some crossover in information use between these broad groups and that even within these groups that there will be different information needs depending on the personal circumstances of the individuals.

Administrative Information Users

These users of information are likely to be policy makers or administrators in sport and their need is likely to be for current political information, for directories, for reports, statistical information, legislation and for general management information.

Scientific Information Users

These users are likely to be practitioners and researchers working in the various disciplines of sports science - sports doctors, physiotherapists, biomechanists, psychologists, physiologists, sociologists. Scientific users general require access to highly specialised textbooks, conference proceedings and journals and rely heavily on bibliographic databases to retrieve references relevant to their research. These users are also increasingly reliant on online services like the Internet to ensure that they maintain contact with colleagues and fellow researchers in all parts of the world.

Coaches and Athletes

Coaches and athletes have a requirement for up to date information on techniques and training, information on the performance of their competitors and up to date results and ranking information. Sport specific journals and newspapers are critical sources of information to coaches and athletes. Coaches and athletes make extensive use of visual resources such as videotapes as these assists in performance analysis.

Media as Information Users

The media have a huge appetite for sport information ranging from historical information to up to the minute results and athlete profile information. All information sources printed and electronic are utilised by the media however the depth of access of this information will depend on whether the member of the media is reporting on a result or producing a piece with in depth analysis. News services and photographic resources are a critical information source for the media for contemporary and historical reporting.

Public Information Users

The public may have a variety of information needs depending on their interest in sport however information on athletes (player profiles) events and results is popular with the general public. Increasingly the public are finding this sort of information available to them on the Internet as information service providers become increasingly aware of the value of the Internet as a means to distribute large amounts of information to a diverse population over dispersed geographic areas.

It is the task of those responsible for the management and development of sport information centres to determine who will be the main users of the information centre and to establish a needs profile which can be responded to with different information resources and different information delivery strategies. Chapter 2 part 1 of this manual provides details the processes involved in assessing user needs.

It should be noted that the attitudes of those who use information could vary greatly depending on a range of personal factors. These factors include their age, educational background and social background and it is the skill of the information manager to deliver the *right information* to the *right user* at the *right*

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time bearing in mind that needs often change over time. It is essential that the manager of a sport information service constantly assesses and reassesses the information needs of the users of the information centre and clearly states what sort of services will be delivered to meet these needs. In some cases this will be done on a formal basis through questionnaires, meetings and focus groups and in other cases needs will be assessed through informal contact with the users either in the internal environment of the information centre or elsewhere in the organisation. This informal user contact should not be underestimated as a means of gaining an insight into exactly what the needs of information centre users are and in some cases what the needs of *non-users* of the information service are.

Once user needs have been identified the information centre should categorise these needs on a group and individual basis and then determine if it is in fact possible to meet these user needs bearing in mind the financial and human resources available to service the needs. If user needs cannot in fact be met then users either as individuals or groups needs to be notified of this fact and be advised as to how they might access relevant information from other sources.

It is also important that the information service staff is able to anticipate information needs and to acquire relevant information to meet these needs. For example, if an organisation announces that it is to introduce a new course on a topic such as women in sport then the information centre manager should quickly set about identifying resources which could be purchased or accessed to meet the anticipated demand for information to support the new course.

Whilst people often have information needs they sometimes do not feel comfortable about expressing these needs particularly in an information centre where they may feel intimidated surrounded by large volumes of information and information technology. It is in this situation that information centre staff should make users feel comfortable and use their skills to draw out the details of the users needs. Later in this manual details are provided as to how to market sport information services, this marketing of services is absolutely essential to ensure that users and potential users of the information service are aware of what information services are available to them. In conclusion it should be said that without users an information centre, library or documentation centre has no use.

1.3 INFORMATION

MEDIA:

THE DOCUMENTS

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pleasure.

Concept of document

A number of authors [02], [10] have agreed on describing the document as a knowledge fixed on a material medium and created in view of communication, which may be used for consultation, study or pleasure. Regardless of the medium on which the information has been recorded, it is an essential tool for the diffusion of knowledge and, in this sense, a means for training and education. Documents are the material basis of human knowledge and memory [18], and thus indispensable to bear witness to the facts.

We call «Scientific documentation» the process of gathering and processing all documents relating to a specific subject in view of its proper diffusion [02]. Thus, scientific documentation in the sports field is the interdisciplinary science which allows research on the behaviour of information, on its use and on the technical procedures aimed at the best accessibility to it.

Specifications of a document

Concerning scientific documentation, a document is valid provided it meets the following criteria[02]:
- *originality:* it must be the result of a research
- *reliability:* it must be reliable, ie. that authors and sources may be identified
- *usefulness:* it must be useful, corresponding to stated or latent needs
- *accessibility:* this implies it is easily accessible, with the single exception of confidential documents.

Types of documents

There is not a single type of document classification. Depending on the approach, there may be documents:

■ Fulfilling given specifications:

- *physical specifications:* (material, size, weight, presentation, for direct consultation or requiring the use of an instrument, etc.)
- *intellectual specifications:* (aim, content, author category, source, accessibility, etc.)

■ According to their nature:

A difference may be established between textual and non textual documents [18]:

- *textual documents* present most of the information in writing, like books, periodicals, catalogues, etc.
- *non textual documents* may contain a text, though it is not its main part. The information they contain should be seen or listened to:
    - iconographic documents: images, cards, maps, graphs, photographs, slides, etc.
    - sound documents: records, tapes, etc.
    - audiovisual documents: films, videotapes, videodisks, etc.
    - material documents: objects, models, games, teaching objects, etc.
    - magnetic documents: software

■ According to their medium,
documents may be:

- *on paper:* hand-written texts, printed books, photographs, reproductions, etc.
- *on a film:* audiovisual aids, microforms (microfiche, microfilm)
- *on magnetic medium:* magnetic sound tracks, records, tapes, diskettes, etc.
- *on electronic medium:* optical disks, videodisks, software, Internet, etc.

■ According to their content [02],
documents may be:

- *primary documents:* complete and original documents: a book, a videotape, a software, etc.
- *secondary documents:* a condensed representation of the document contents: an abstract, a summary, etc.
- *tertiary documents:* lists of secondary publications, etc.
- *reference documents:* documents for consultation with an internal structure which allows for a fast, accurate and concise information: dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.

Aims of scientific information

Scientific information [02] aims are:

- *exhaustiveness:* providing all information on a specific subject
- *pertinence:* providing only those documents dealing with a specific subject
- *precision:* retrieving the information defined by the user
- *speed:* getting information in the shortest delay
- *economy:* allowing for the access to scientific documentation as inexpensively as possible.
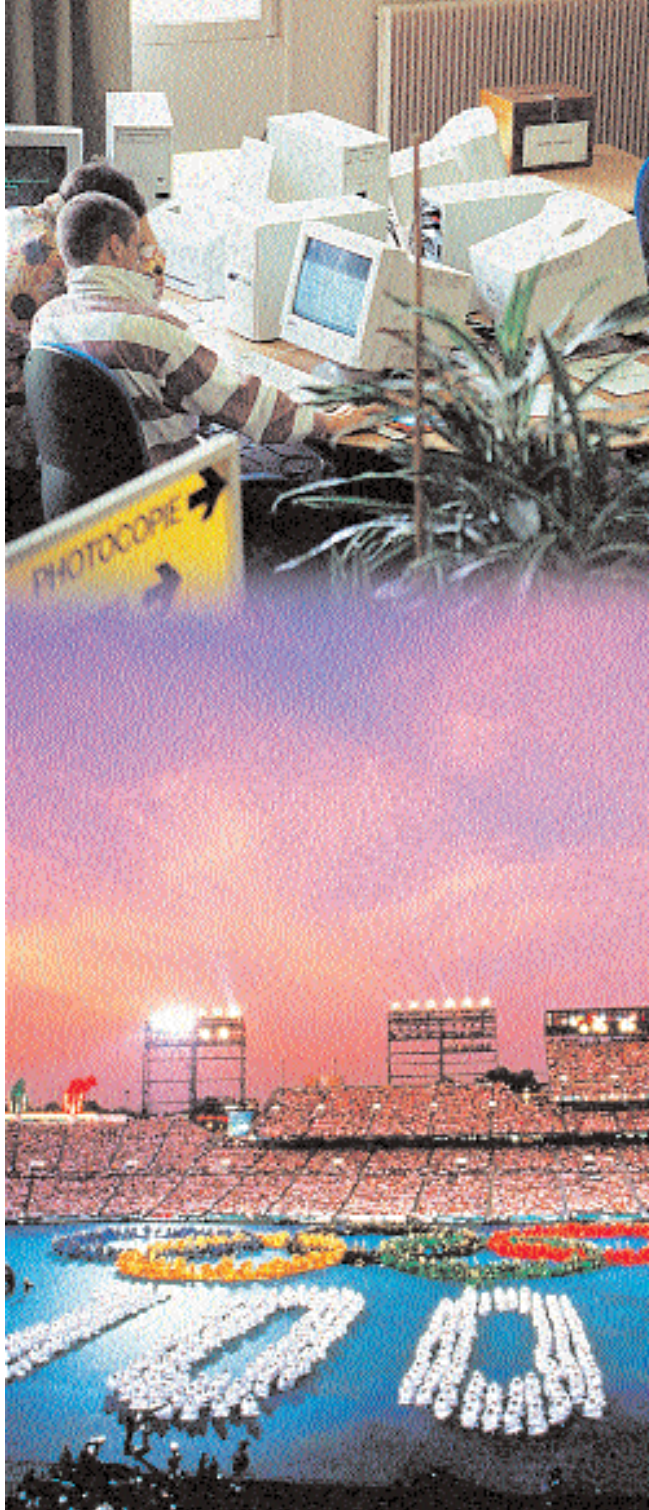
1.4 INFORMATION

SOURCES

AND THEIR ACCESS

In sport there are numerous sources of information and it is not possible to document every possible source in this brief chapter so a broad overview of the general sources is provided.

In sport there are numerous sources of information and it is not possible to document every possible source in this brief chapter so a broad overview of the general sources is provided. It should also be stated that in no one place is it possible to collect all of the information which is likely to be relevant to those who work in sport even if they are highly specialised workers such as sports scientists.

Libraries, Documentation Centres and Information Centres

What sports libraries, documentation centres and sport information services try do is to provide a framework in which to gather, to record and to disseminate sport information to a wide variety of users. In the past these centres concentrated on acquiring information from a variety of sources and arranging this information for ease of access but today there is increasingly an emphasis on access to information rather than the acquisition of information. Of course there is still a place for the acquisition of core resources in information centres which are required to meet the every day information needs of organisations and their clients. These resources may be books, journals, audio visual resources including videotapes and audiocassettes, conference papers, CD-ROM data bases, newspapers pamphlets etc. which are systematically organised (catalogued or indexed) within the information centre for ease of retrieval. However, it is important to recognise that these traditional resources held within an organisation are not the only sources of sport information.

Other libraries like University libraries, hospital medical libraries and public libraries are often sources of sport information for example medical libraries often hold information of relevance to sports medicine doctors which may be too specialised or too expensive to hold for one person in a sport information centre. Sport information centres should become involved in co-operative networks, which often include these other institutions. In some countries there are formal networks of libraries and information centres which support each others activities through services such as inter-library loans, shared catalogues and co-operative cataloguing of resources which avoids unnecessary duplication of effort. In some countries there are electronic networks which link a range of information centres and libraries so that they can easily share their information resources. The importance of sharing information cannot be overstated in an environment where information sources are becoming increasingly expensive.

Electronic Information Sources

In the digital age more and more information is being stored electronically either in stand alone electronic products such as CD-ROMs which contain both bibliographic and increasingly full text information or through networked online electronic environments.

Increasingly information is being made available on the Internet, which has become an invaluable source of information related to sport. The Internet which began in the 1960s is now a global network which connects over 50 million people electronically and through world wide web services offers access to thousands of pages of information.

There are now thousands of Internet sites, which relate to sport providing access to information. These sites may be governmental organisations such as the UK Sports Council, non-governmental organisations such as the International Olympic Committee, private companies such as Nike, international sports federations, academic institutions which have sports courses such as the University of Jyvaaskayla, sports institutes such as INSEP and so on. Whilst there are costs involved in accessing the Internet and there is a requirement for an investment in a computer, modem and phone line, sport information centres must weigh up the benefits of having information stored in the centre 'Just in Case' it is needed as distinct from accessing information through electronic sources on the basis that it will be received 'Just in Time'.

The Internet is increasingly being used for the publication of full text documents and for pictures and video replacing some of the more traditional forms for the publication and distribution of information. Whilst the access to information has increased with the Internet we are now approaching a situation of «information overload» and it is in this context that sport information centres must play a role in assisting the users of a source like the Internet to «navigate» themselves to quality sources of information in the most timely manner. It is all very well travelling the 'information superhighway' but the journey should be smooth with the user not becoming lost on the way and reaching the desired destination in the minimum amount of time.

Other Information Sources

Whilst libraries, information centres and electronic information sources like the Internet are vital to information users it should be noted that there are a number of other sources of information which might be accessed directly by information users themselves or be accessed on their behalf by information centre staff. These sources are official organisations such as the Council of Europe and IAKS, which produce policy documents and offer advice. Press agencies such as Reuters and Associated Press, which distributes news, stories internationally through wire services and nowadays the Internet are important information sources. Sports exhibitions such as Sportel and trade shows such as the International Leisure Show held in the UK are also important information sources as they showcase new industry developments, have expertise on hand to give out information and produce a range of pamphlet material. Whilst these sources might not be considered traditional information sources their usefulness in meeting diverse information needs should not be discounted.

In addition personal networks and networks formed with like organisations should not be discounted in satisfying information needs particularly when one considers the result of research which has shown that 'personal contact' is the means by which the majority of information needs are met. It is the role of the information centre to facilitate the exchange of information between individuals by identifying contacts for information users. In some cases these contacts will be identified through sources such as published directories, however in some cases they may be identified through information service contacts which the staff of the information centre have established through their personal networks.

Increasingly listservs or electronic discussion groups on the Internet are being used by individuals to communicate with others who have like interests and through this process personal contacts for information exchange develop. It is also important that information centre staff maintain and develop personal contacts with other sport information providers so that experiences in accessing information can be shared and so that there is the possibility of calling on the experience of others to satisfy the information needs of clients. The International Association for Sports Information operates a listserv on the Internet to ensure that this facility for personal contact between sport information providers exists.

As stated at the beginning of the chapter it is essential that those providing information services in sport understand that there are many sources of information which must be accessed if the diverse information needs of users are to be met.
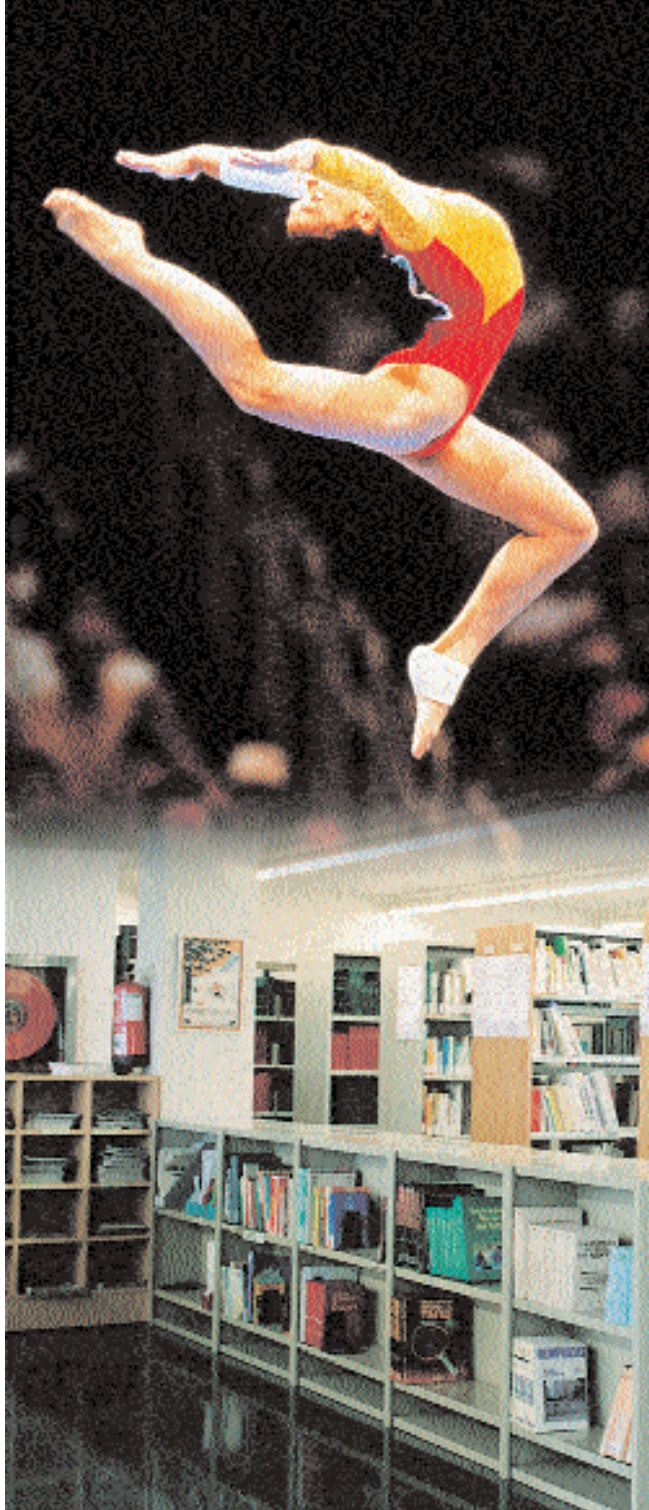
1.5 DOCUMENT AND COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Storage generally means placing the documents (in a variety of formats) containing sport information in the best conditions for preservation and access. Storage is closely connected with the chosen filing system, since a document wrongly filed may not be located and so it may be considered to be lost.

Storage

Storage generally means placing the documents (in a variety of formats) containing sport information in the best conditions for preservation and access. Storage is closely connected with the chosen filing system, since a document wrongly filed may not be located and so it may be considered to be lost [18]. In most sport information centre/libraries there will be an index, list or a catalogue of the documents (information resources) held and this will lead the user to the exact location of the material in the collection.

Location

Today there is what is referred to as the «information explosion» taking place in nearly all disciplines. This means that there is an increasingly large amount of documentation being generated by the increased amount of scientific and technical research being undertaken in all fields including sport. Because of this information explosion it is necessary to use specific processing methods [10] to ensure that the large volume of information is easily accessible.

It is advisable to store the books grouped by subjects on shelves accessible for the user. This logical and physical grouping by subjects is called location and follows a pre-established system.

The chosen system depends above all on the type of document (books, periodicals, papers, audio-visual means, photographs, diskettes or CD-ROMs) and on the frequency of inquiries.

Classification

Classifying means ascribing a concept and a classification index to a document according to a pre-established order that allows for its fast retrieval upon demand [18].

■ Types of classification:

- *alphabetical:* classed by authors or titles
- *systematic:* classed by subjects.

Alphabetical classification is advised for periodical titles.
There are several types of systematic classification systems.

The *«Decimal Classification»* published by Melvil Dewey in 1876 divides human knowledge into 10 main categories and subcategories as well.
In 1905, the Brussels National Institute for Bibliography adopted Dewey's decimal classification and extended the tables.

Other editions of this classification also known as *«Universal Decimal Classification»* (UDC) or as Brussels classification appeared and were published in several languages.
During the second meeting on Physical Education and sport-related information in May 1960 in Paris, specialists from seventeen countries chose to use the UDC as their classification system. In 1986, a group of IASI experts supervised by I.Toth, published a proposal to revise and extend the system to make it correspond to the fields of Sport Sciences [20]. The International Federation of Information and Documentation approved the proposal.
In the world, big libraries such as the US *«Library of Congress»* have developed their own classification system and this is used by a number of sports libraries.

Though a systematic classification may be used as a location system, it is better to use the classification system best suited to the centre's specific needs.

Call mark

The call mark is the set of symbols allowing for the location of books on the shelves.

There are different systems of call marks classification created by sports libraries like the Olympic Library in Lausanne, the INSEP Library in Paris, The INEF Library in Madrid or the Sports Library in Barcelona. Those centres use a set of symbols physically represented on a visible space, i.e. on the label of the spine of the book. This classification system includes the number indicating the subject or the area where the book is stored, plus the first three letters of the author's name, thus facilitating its alphabetical location within the chosen system.

Example of call mark classification at the Sport Library:

O Olympism
0.0 General remarks on Olympism
0.1 Olympic movement
0.1.7 International Olympic Academy
Author: Conrado Durántez
Title: The International Olympic Academy

Call mark = 0.1.7 DUR

Filing

The fragility of some materials, such as brochures, microforms or photographs, videotapes require special filing procedures, i.e. box files, special folders for microfiches or envelops for photographs. With regard to photograph collections it is necessary to provide for one system for paper prints and another one for negatives, since due to their small size they might be easily lost. Furthermore, negatives must be protected in envelopes or in semi-transparent paper strips. In the case of videotapes they may need to be kept in an environment with facilities to maintain a constant temperature.

A large part of the sports information centre's documentary fund is made up of administrative documents or publications issued by offi-cial bodies, belonging to the bibliography known as grey literature. Their contents are of high interest, but their external aspect is quite fragile. They must be grouped according to a logical order; this may be by subject, by geographical areas or by publishing bodies —if they are produced by the official body they come from— or by proper nouns, if they are biographies. As for brochures, it is advisable to gather this documentation, properly stored, in folders or box files.

Example:

In a box file containing documentation concerning swimming, several subthemes are kept in folders, each one with a given number of documents. The folders correspond to the following epigraphs:
- Swimming in Olympic Games'
- Swimming World Championships'
- International Federation of Amateur Swimming'
- National Federation of Amateur Swimming'
- Swimming Clubs'
etc.
And so on, according to the centre's needs.

It is most interesting for sport libraries to collect press cuttings and thematic reviews. Cuttings, obtained from national and international press, may be classified by subjects or countries. Within countries, a chronological order is established, and within this one the papers are ordered by titles. In general, reviews on a monographic subject are also stored according to dates, mentioning their source.

Maintenance

The documentary resources of a sport information centre/library must be safely preserved; otherwise information may be lost. The task of ensuring the conservation of all documents, whatever the medium used, has to be assumed by the information centre.

Decisions will need to be made as to how much material (documentary information) should be retained by a sport information centre and for how long. If a decision is taken to keep historical information over a long period of time then special storage arrangements might have to be made e.g. an archival storage room. In some cases sport information centres may decide only to hold current and up to date information because techniques might change e.g. High Jump technique. If this is the case then systems will have to be put in place to decide what materials should be discarded and to describe how this is to be done.

1.6 INFORMATION

PROCESSING

By documentary chain we are referring to the set of operations required for the running of any documentary system. In sport as in many disciplines information centres identify documents, which then become part of the information centre/library documentary collection.
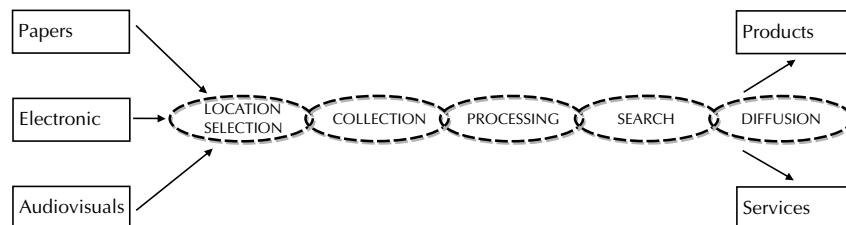
The documentary chain

By documentary chain we are referring to the set of operations required for the running of any documentary system. In sport as in many disciplines information centres identify documents, which then become part of the information centre/library documentary collection. These documents are then analysed, described, processed and organised so that they can be found by the staff of the information centre and the users and the information contained in the documents disseminated to those who need the information.

The diagram below represents this process.

THE DOCUMENTARY CHAIN

SOURCES

Document processing is the most important part in the chain.

The documentary analysis

The documentary analysis is a set of techniques including cataloguing, indexing, filing and abstracting [02].

■ Analysing the form: bibliographical description

Cataloguing consists of a bibliographical description of a document based on its main features. It aims at the physical identification of the document [24].

There are several kinds of cataloguing. *'Global'* cataloguing refers to the title of periodicals, *'Monographic'* cataloguing refers to books or single works, *'Analytical'* cataloguing refers to a book chapter or to an article in a review, in which case it is called *'Indexing'*.

The analysis of the document form is standardised by different international and national organisations. The International Federation of Libraries Association (IFLA) has set cataloguing standards for the bibliographical description of documents, regardless of their material medium. These standards constitute a set of procedures internationally known as ISBD standards (International Standard Bibliographic Description). These are a set of basic common rules aimed at facilitating the exchange of bibliographical data.

■ Analysing the content: indexing and abstracting

Analysing the content of documents is far more complex. The ISO 214 Standard prescribes rules applicable to the preparation and presentation of document analysis and is addressed to both authors and analysts [02].
The UNESCO has defined indexing as the process describing, by means of one or sever-

al terms, the concepts included in a document. The standard term or set of terms describing the meaningful content of a document is called *'descriptors'* [24].

The indexing level may be generic, intermediate or in-depth, according to the needs and objectives of the centre. A generic indexing merely indicates the subject of a document. We speak of in-depth indexing when its contents are exhaustively analysed. In both cases the number of descriptors may vary.

Abstracting is an intellectual operation integrated within the content analysis. An abstract is a brief, concise and objective text that represents and may even replace the search of the original document. There are

several types of abstracts: analytical, descriptive and informative.
The concepts included in the abstract do have to appear within the indexed terms. The abstract may also include terms that will not be part of the descriptors, either because there

are new terms not yet introduced or because they are very specific complementary terms.

The technique called *'automated indexing'* consists in entering the title and the abstract in the computer, which by means of specific control and terms validation methods will identify and store them to provide the descriptors, attached to the document.

Documentary languages

Through its UNISIST program, the UNESCO has encouraged actions aimed at the development of scientific vocabularies, which are essential for the definition of indexing terms.

There is a difference between natural and documentary languages. The authorised and standardised terms of documentary languages are called *'descriptors'*, which are used to represent specific concepts essential for information retrieval. The terms *'keyword'* and *'descriptor'* are frequently used without distinction, but they should not be confused. While the authors provide keywords themselves so that they are published together with their scientific work, descriptors belong to the domain of controlled language (created by a competent body) and have to be used by the person in charge of the indexing process.

A *'thesaurus'* is the organised set of terms of a controlled vocabulary. It is usually applied to

a given domain of knowledge. Several relationships are established among synonyms, hierarchies (indicating relationships among descriptors), and levels (from the most general to the most specific ones). Associative relationships and pieces of advice on the use of terms are also provided.

In sports, it is worth mentioning the thesauri of the databases «Sport», of SIRC (Sport Information Resource Centre at Ottawa, Canada), and «Heracles», of the French-speaking Network SPORTDOC. In some cases these thesauri have been adopted by specific countries that have added terms to the thesauri to reflect the nature of sport in their particular environment.

The description of the documents held in an information centre generally results in the creation of a catalogue or an index to the collection, which helps staff and users, find the exact information, they require. It is possible to create a catalogue of a collection on paper or on cards but increasingly documents in sport information collections and the contents of these documents are being described in detail in electronic databases. These electronic databases enable a greater level of sophistication and precision in locating information within the documentary collection.

1.7 DESK RESEARCH OR REFERENCE WORK

Desk research or reference work should be considered as the essential function for information professionals and especially in a small documentation centre where there are few information resources or only a small collection of information to call on to meet the needs of users.

Desk research or reference work should be considered as the essential function for information professionals and especially in a small documentation centre where there are few information resources or only a small collection of information to call on to meet the needs of users.

The objective of desk research or reference work is to provide the right and specific information that the final user expects, respecting that user's requirements in terms of timeframe and content. This objective can only be achieved if there is a real dialogue between the final user who is asking for information and the person in the information centre who is undertaking the desk research. This dialogue needs to start with the person doing the research undertaking an indepth analysis of the question being asked. The information centre staff member then needs to elaborate and implement research strategy, which will lead to the eventual acquisition of documents, the presentation of the results of the research to the user and hopefully a high level of user satisfaction.

Dialogue with the final user

The initial wording of the question from the user or the person who needs information is rarely explicit enough, because of this the person undertaking the desk research needs to ask questions of the user to make sure there is a clear and mutually understood question to be researched. By asking questions we obtain essential information to achieve the success of the research process. The information centre staff questions should not only clarify the topic of the research question but should also clarify the nature of documents or of the information to be gathered, the shape and deadlines for presenting the results. At this stage an assessment should also be made of the level of knowledge of the person requesting the information has currently and what sort of knowledge level they aspire to.

A systematic rewording of the user's expectations ensures a good understanding of his or her needs.

By discussing the research topic in detail with the user then the information centre staff member is able to make an inventory of underlying concepts and specialized vocabulary.

Having established the exact nature of the question to be answered the information centre staff then undertake bibliographical research which will aim to retrieve the right documents for the user. Some features will help to select the right documents to meet the users needs these include: period of publication, language of documents, specific type of documents to search (original articles, works, bibliographical syntheses, etc.).

Once material is being retrieved it may be useful to start the dialogue with the user again to ensure that the information being retrieved is what the user expects.

Study the question thoroughly

At the conclusion of the interview with the user it is often useful for the information centre staff to improve their general knowledge on the subject, on its set of problems and on its specific vocabulary. This can be done by consulting Reference books (manuals, treatises or encyclopedias) which will constitute the fund of a small unit of documentation are useful for this purpose.

With a clear understanding of the research question the information centre staff member can break down the problem into various questions which are much easier to deal with and allows from these it is possible to make an exhaustive inventory of concepts and representative words.

An overall description of the problem may now be achieved in a research equation form calling for Boolean algebra: the sets are linked with the operators AND, OR, NOT. For example, if a user required information on coach or referee education in Canada and only in the French language the search string might be: coach OR referee AND education AND Canada NOT English.

Identifying and choosing available sources of information

The identification and the choice of sources of information is made easier by the constant work of the documentalist/librarian who should have a full «address book» and general or specialized indexes. The documentalist/librarian should proceed to search those sources where it will be the easiest to find the most comprehensive and the most reliable information on the question being asked.

In general those undertaking desk research or reference work should use:

■ Documentary files of the centre when they are sufficient

■ Secondary or tertiary specialized documents and reference documents (dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes, etc.) in classical printed forms or computerized: today usual bibliographies are widely diffused in diskettes and databases or encyclopedias in CD-ROM

■ Specialized libraries or documentation centres or the information or documents available or already processed and much easier to collect. Then if we delegate the research,

it is absolutely essential to communicate all information obtained during the dialogue with the final user

■ Telecommunications resources: bibliographical databases, textual or factual databases, various electronic documents, etc. Thanks to these resources and the development of Internet, the documentalist becomes a «cyberian» and he or she has at his or her disposal an enormous range of resources to answer questions, which are not always held physically in an information centre

■ Exceptionally those undertaking desk research or reference work will appeal to specialists, when they are free, who may be able to assist in validating information quickly.

Executing research with available tools

Every documentary tool (retrospective or current bibliography, manual or computerized files, etc.) has its own specific way of consultation and it is necessary for the information centre staff undertaking research to adapt to the different ways of searching for information.

The way that a researcher would search for information on a theme file is very different from the way that information would be researched in a computerized database or in a printed bibliography which might be organised according to a classification plan or index.

Research terms derived from the original question are translated into indexing terms for every tool (to identify relevant descriptors or indexes of the classification plan) which will be consulted.

If the research is to be carried out on a computerized database, research equations should be adapted to the structures of the databases to be used and to the operators used in the enquiry software.

Because sport information centre staff are familiar with the research tools they tend to be

more efficient in searching and identify relevant research (the answers given by the questioned system correspond to the requested question) while limiting the noise (the rate of answers not corresponding to the requested question).

Obtaining primary documents

Before going in search of documents which have been identified in the research process, it is advisable to present the bibliography or list of research findings to the final user since this is the person who will decide on the relevance of documents when reading titles or abstracts.

Most producers of secondary documentary products provide primary documents that they catalogue, especially periodicals. In the case of the SPORT database the Canadian Sport Information Resource Centre identifies which articles are available for purchase.

In developed countries there are some organizations, which specialise in the supply of documents: the INIST in France, the British Library in Great Britain, The Library of Congress etc. Some of these organisations only provide documents to other libraries and information centres in their own countries, others supply documents internationally. It is advisable for documentation/information centres to open deposit accounts with such organisations so that orders for documents can be placed and the charges for these debited against the account. This makes the process of acquiring documents very quick and in some cases orders may be quickly forwarded with new information technologies (fax, electronic mail).

Lending and photocopy tariffs may be adjusted according to the nature of client (company or public organization) and often according to the method and speed of delivery e.g. higher tariffs for articles, which are faxed rather than posted. It is also possible to request documents and loans from libraries and documentation centres which have their collections listed on national collective (union) catalogues which are increasingly available for consultation on telecommunications networks.

In sport many sport information centres have established reciprocal arrangements for the supply of documents (nationally and internationally) where there are often no tariffs or relatively low tariffs charged between the organisations.

Collating the results of the research

Once the research has been carried out then the person doing the research should present the research results in the most readable way to the user, using typing or computer means.

As the case may be, the researcher may submit:

- A bibliography organised according to processed subthemes
- A documentary file gathering all collected primary documents
- A synthesis of available information. For such an elaborate work, the documentalist should be a specialist in the handled domain.

Evaluating the results of the research and communicating these to the final user

The submission of results to the final user should include comments which explain any difficulties encountered during the research and any limits on the results of the research.

An interview with the final user will allow a conclusion on the validity of the supplied information and may result in further research.

It is advisable for sport information/documentation centres to maintain statistics and records of reference questions. This information can assist the information centre not only in assessing workload but can assist in identifying user needs and in planning to make sure that resources are available to answer the questions most commonly asked by users.

1.8 THE INFORMATION
FLOW

Nowadays, information constantly flows, even more so than goods or people do. We are living within the Information Society and there is an ever-increasing amount of data and information being exchanged, sent and received.

Nowadays, information constantly flows, even more so than goods or people do. We are living within the Information Society and there is an ever-increasing amount of data and information being exchanged, sent and received. This leads to an increase in the time people have to devote to getting and knowing the information required for their job and for their leisure time as well. It no longer seems difficult to access information, and thus there is an increasing demand on the side of employers for people to know all of the necessary information to constantly update their knowledge and to «keep abreast».

It is true that now it is easier than ever to get access to all kind of documents and information. There are more and more companies exclusively devoted to the diffusion of information. Furthermore, information technologies are always changing and the existing elec-

tronic communications network allows to keep to a minimum the time required for data to flow from one point to another, regardless of the distance between them.

This new situation is deeply modifying people's attitudes with regard to information. The regular use of automated systems for information flow, mainly through the Internet network, induces people to believe that accessing information is easy and fast and that everyone can do it. This is not true, but the users' attitude towards an information centre is influenced by the belief that «they can do this work by themselves».

And, as it happens in the market of whatever product, «the client is always right». It is said that factors such as time and space are decreasing to the point of almost disappearing, and so, deadlines, which not long ago seemed acceptable for getting a document, are now felt as unbearable. Thus, an information centre must act according to these premises if it does not want to lose its clients. But we must take into account that, when processing and circulating its information, the information centre has to keep up a series of quality criteria that the Internet as a whole does not seem obliged to respect.

Organizing the flow

The sports information centre has to organize its information flow according to:

- The real demands of its users, previously defined and known through internal and external information audits
- The goals set by the information centre as its priorities
- The capacity of its human resources, its technology and its budget to keep its own offer and to fulfil the expectations its has created.

Information media

At the moment, the sports information centre still greatly depends on the traditional systems of information flow, because they are the ones more deeply rooted and they offer

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consolidated and valid products, and because new technologies are not yet fully introduced. However it is clear that very soon a whole transformation is going to be experienced, both in the way documents are processed and in the systems used to retrieve them.

We still have to use many of the traditional tools, but trying to make their design and flow livelier. The medium should not be expensive nor be expected to last a long time. The important thing is the content, and in such products the container is becoming less and less important. As far as possible, priority should be given to the use of the technologies available, in the following order: 1) electronic mail, 2) fax, and 3) traditional communication systems (mail). All services that might circulate through electronic mail should do so, from interlibrary loans to bibliographical searches. If not possible, we should use the fax and only as a last resort use traditional mail.

Electronic mail allows us to send large files. If it is not possible to send information through the network, it should be noted that diskettes and recordable CDs allow the transfer of a large volume of data at low cost and that currently most people who receive data in this format can handle it with their own computer and may find them preferable to paper documents. Besides, in this kind of medium there is no difference when processing written documents, fixed images, graphs, tables, voices or moving images.

These technologies and information flow systems should allow us to integrate users as a real and active part of the centre, and we must get them to feel so. Communication has to be broad and direct, personalized, specific, and there has to be a user's feedback, which may bring new information, and/or documents that the centre will incorporate to its documentary funds.

The sports information centre is thus becoming a qualified intermediary in the information flow, and not just its container. Information does not come from a given point and is then disseminated towards another ones, but con-

stantly flows, at times arriving to convergence points, such as the various information, documentation and research centres, which treat, reorganize and classify it... and the make it flow again.

Electronic editions

All information flow systems are nowadays converging into the use of web pages on the Internet. This greatly facilitates the diffusion of the information held by the centre, while helping the centre to make itself and its offer of services and documentary products known. Today, offering through the web information concerning both the centre and the information available at it is necessary and fully profitable too.

But this does not mean that this is the definitive system. Access to databases through the web greatly reduces the capacity of refining and delimiting the searches. Nevertheless, it also seems that the bibliographic data bases concept may be replaced soon by a system providing access, not to the reference nor even to the document where the specific information might be found, but to the requested information itself.

While waiting for this future to come, the centre should foresee that its structure is going to

undergo a change, and it should evaluate the time spent in processes which will fall into disuse. What seems fairly true is that the «web concept», the one of navigating through the documents by means of more and more advanced hypertext systems will shape the environment of information flow. And within it, we might define a series of characteristics, which every researcher should bear in mind:

- the main thing in every information page within the web (info-web) is the content
- each info-web should have a well-defined goal
- from the beginning one should think about the faster way of updating and improving contents, without losing the documentary «memory» of documents and information
- less is more, and the info-web should be based on its contents specialization within a very clear framework of action areas
- an info-web without external links is an island and a nonsense. We are in an interactive world. Thus it should offer access to those info-webs which might complement it
- when talking about these subjects, we are talking about information, not about information sciences or computers. This is still an environment for information communicators and managers, not for engineers.

Besides, one should not forget that documents of traditional structure, such as journals, are already in some cases only being distributed by an electronic medium, because of the clear financial advantages of doing so. In many cases this only means a change of medium, without any other technical advantage, but their existence is another factor to consider and leads us to conclude that the regular use of virtual environments is becoming unavoidable.

1.9 COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION OF INFORMATION CENTRES

In these last years of the 20th century, we are in an initial stage of the information society, which is drawing near with all its possibilities. The main features of this society, the globalization and the integration of communication systems, are coming true day by day.

In these last years of the 20th century, we are in an initial stage of the information society, which is drawing near with all its possibilities. The main features of this society, the globalization and the integration of communication systems, are coming true day by day. Thus, we may assert that the communication process is going to happen on an uninterrupted and permanent basis, twenty-four hours a day in almost every sector of life. Working and public attention schedules are becoming more flexible, adapted to the real demands of society, and it is foreseeable that any centre, especially those devoted to information management, should be able to offer a permanent service, made-to-measure for each of its clients.

Following a classical journalistic approach, it is possible to define the main features of the sports information centre's communication needs by answering a series of questions which ought to cover all we need to know about the subject:

What?

A classical author says, «if it has no name, it does not exist», and today this statement is still valid: if something is not known, it is as if it did not exist. At least, it will not be useful for those who might benefit from it and, needless to say, it will not be as profitable as it might be for those having created it. So, we have to think that all work carried out in the field of sport has to be shown. The information centre in sport needs to clearly promote by all available means the fact that it exists, its goals, and the products and services it offers and the systems it has to access information. The sport information centre should disseminate information, which is true, in keeping with the centre's reality and its technical and budgetary capacity, clearly explaining the space it occupies within the sports information system. It is necessary to differentiate, particularize and individualize the message, to make it identifiable from other existing centres. It is necessary to promote the so-called «corporate image» of the centre and of the institution it belongs to.

In this view, previously the persons responsible for the centre should have answered the questions we are now trying to answer. They should have done an «information audit» about themselves.

Whom?

The sport information centre has to consider that it exists only to serve its «clients». But it should see clearly that there are many types of clients, even some it would not usually think of as such. We will call them publics and we will try to differentiate them by means of some clear feature in order to make available to them the information services and products they are most interested in.

■ Internal public. Not only the centre staff but also those working in other areas of the organization the centre belongs to, the administrators, the technical staff. They are an important public whose information needs must be satisfied.

■ External public, users. They are those people making regular use of the information services and products offered by the centre. The relationship should be a close and permanent one, personalized as far as possible, since we should try not to lose them as clients.

■ Other external publics, potential users. Those people, who do not make use of the centre but who, according to their characteristics and interests, might do so if they knew about the services offered by the centre. These people represent a potential client group whose information needs might be met by the centre. It is important for information centres to consider how they might reach this group and to consider what sort of services and products might attract them to the information centre for the first time.

■ The remaining publics. All those who will never be users of the centre. But they may

be related to sport, to the place where the centre is located, etc. Even if they will never request anything from the information centre, it is important that these people know of the service and what it offers. These people may know someone who in turn may need the services of the information centre, and, at any rate, it is always good if they know that the centre exists and where it is.

When?

The answer is simple: every time. We cannot be disconnected from the information system for a single minute. This does not mean that the information centre should be open 24 hours a day, but it should not be disconnected. Technology makes it a great deal easier: information on the web, an e-mail address, an answering machine on the telephone and a fax line open the whole day, all are inexpensive systems indispensable for information centres. These devices ensure that the service is not isolated and does not give users and potential users the «engaged tone».

Where?

Communication has very well defined channels, and the information concerning the information centre (we are not referring here to the information -documents- held by the centre, but to the communication channels concerning the centre itself) should be where the user goes to find it.

It is important for information centres to have short, clear and appealing information printed on paper (a small leaflet is enough), which those visiting the centre may take with them or which may be mailed to those requiring it. These leaflets which are promotional tools should be distributed at gatherings, congresses and meetings of all those who might be interested in the information centre services. There should be also a version of such information, which might be sent by fax and by electronic mail. And, needless to say, in these days there should be a version of this information on the Internet.

We should not forget that all these documents cannot be contradictory. It is customary for automated information to be updated easier and on a more regular basis than printed one. The number of printed documents should be set so that they do not become obsolete before being used up. It is important to discard information about the centre which is out of date or inaccurate.

In spite of the virtual world in which we are living, information centres generally are physically located in a place. It is essential to advise users of the street name, number, district and all information which will enable people to visit the information centre (bus lines, underground, etc.).

How?

There are a number of tools available to promote information services. Some of these tools are characteristic of large corporations (advertising in mass media), but many of them may be developed by the information centre's staff itself. It is a matter of using techniques and tools coming from the marketing and public relations field, even from advertising and from the world of press and public relations offices. There will always be a method more or less suited to the needs of an information service.

It is important that the staff of an information centre are trained in communication and promotion. This may seem obvious but these activities still require a series of techniques that have to be learnt, both in the form and, also most importantly, in the content of the messages. Contradictory or incomplete messages should not be emitted.

Why?

To end as we began: because if we do not manage to get the information centre known, the sport information centre's potential users will not be able to use and benefit from the fruits of the work the staff of the information service carry out every day. Information centres must communicate with users and promote their services to current and potential users at every opportunity.

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1.10 INFORMATION

LAW

Today there are a number of legal issues associated with information management and information processing. These legal issues vary from country to country and involve such issues as royalty payments, copyright, loan rights and special provisions for computer sciences, including those for databases and the Internet.
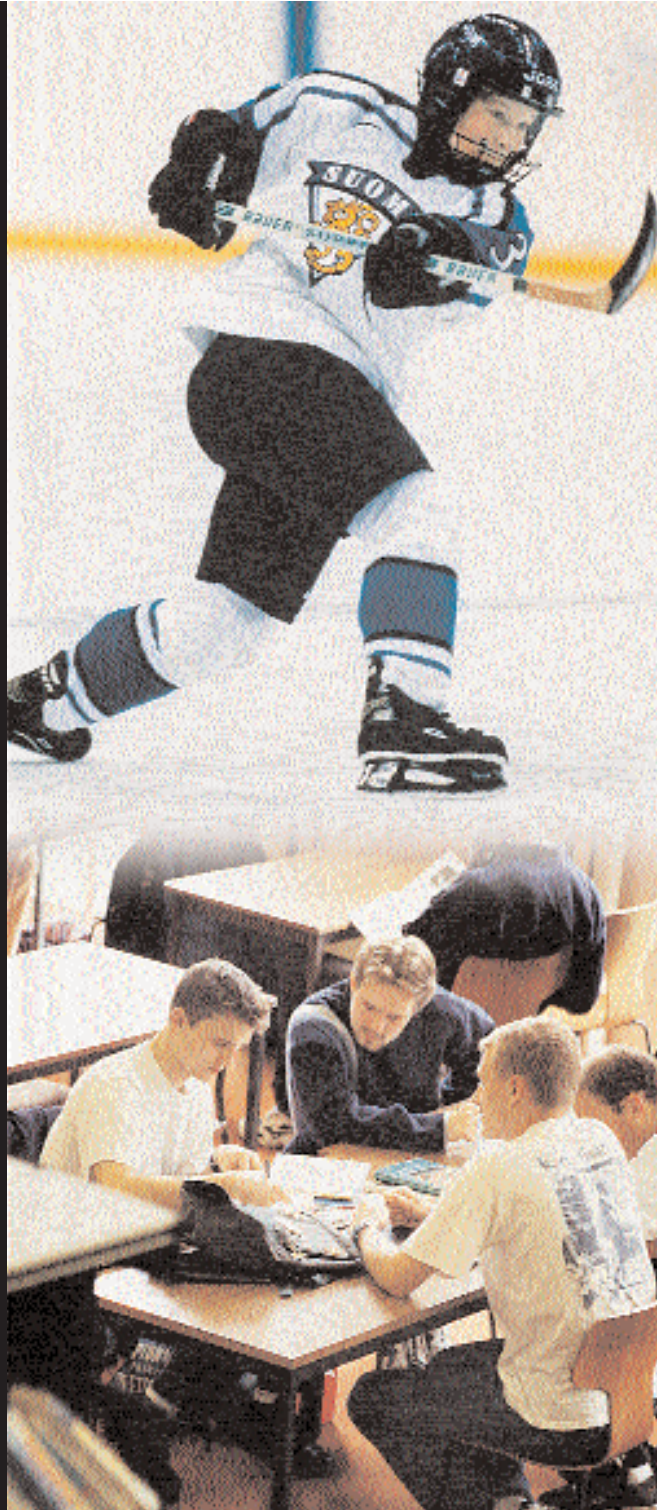
Today there are a number of legal issues associated with information management and information processing. These legal issues vary from country to country and involve such issues as royalty payments, copyright, loan rights and special provisions for computer sciences, including those for databases and the Internet.

All professionals carrying out documentary tasks in a broad sense should bear in mind the royalties or copyright provisions determining the legal conditions for the use of documents.

At the international level, the first legal text to consider is the Convention of Berne of October 9th 1886, followed by the Convention of Geneva, of September 6th 1952, also known as the Universal Copyright Convention. This Convention established the international concept of copyright, symbolised by the sign © which assigns a variety of rights to the authors and publishers of information and limits what might be done with this information by other parties including information centres.

In most countries national legislation has been prepared to implement the Berne Convention. It is important that those who work in sport information have an understanding of the copyright legislation of their own country and that of the legislation of other countries. This is important because what might be legal in one country may in fact contravene the copyright legislation of another country.

The legislation in relation to copyright frames most activities performed in the information centre, among them:

■ the elaboration and diffusion of magazines and press reviews
■ photocopying and reprography of documents
■ communication and public loan
■ the implementation and management of picture libraries

■ the conception, protection and running of databases
■ the development and running of Electronic Management of Documents
■ The development of and the access to information on the Internet.

Generally speaking, current trends point at a balance between the respect for laws like Copyright and the professional requirements, which include the broadest diffusion of knowledge and culture.

It is essential that those who manage information centres for sport understand the importance of international and national copyright legislation and that their operations are carried out within the national and international legal framework. This is particularly important, as the information centre is likely to draw on information sources from many different parts of the world to satisfy the needs of users. Users of information centres also have to be made aware of appropriate copyright legislation so that they as individuals do not break the law.

1.11 FINANCIAL

MANAGEMENT OF

INFORMATION CENTRES

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The budget

The budget is essential to organise the current work of the centre and to prepare for the future. As part of the information policy the budget should be precise, realistic and well balanced, although there should always be the provision for some variation to the budget. Nevertheless, caution is necessary if the goal is to achieve a balanced budget at the end of the year: it is wise to overvalue the foreseen expenses (to cover any unexpected event or pricing increase), and to lower the expected incomes (to compensate for inevitable non-payments and recovery delays). In general, the budget year corresponds to the calendar year, although this may vary in some countries and in particular organisations. The budget follows the precise action plan which has been set down for the information service and should be a schedule for the use of available resources against the action plan.

The budget is divided into two parts:

■ income: in general, grants -or credit allocations- and products coming from the services provided by the centre
■ expenses: frequently managed by the administration of the parent organisation.

Expenses and income can be reported through two types of budget:

■ capital budget: this concerns the purchase of materials, equipment and facilities. These are specific actions, though they may be developed over several years when the amount involved is significant

■ operating budget: operations concerning the normal running of the service.

As for investments, there are three possibilities:

■ purchase: it is the less expensive solution for materials with slow technological evolution (e.g. furniture)
■ renting: it allows for a quick adaptation of materials to high technology and to urgent needs (e.g. photocopier)
■ leasing: whilst it is more expensive than the former solutions, it guarantees an up-to-date material when financial resources are not available (e.g computers).

The budget should include a detailed specification and assessment of the expense and income items. In general these will be displayed by each country in a standardised *chart of accounts*. The most representative items in an information service budget are:

■ Expense items

- personnel (the most important for our activity)
- premises
- furniture
- technical equipment
- documentation purchase:
    - specific purchases: books, reports, videotapes...
    - subscriptions: journals, CD ROMs, databases...
(without forgetting exchanged or donated documents; it is advisable to enter them for the same value both as expenses and as income),
- current supplies
- maintenance and repair costs
- communication costs (mail, telephone, facsimile, Internet)
- marketing and promotion costs
- printing and publishing costs
- documentary subcontracting costs

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- training costs
- entertainment expenses
- travel expenses
- subscription expenses (to organisations)
- overheads (participation in the parent organisation's expenses
- other costs to meet local needs.

■ Income items:
  - parent organisation grants
  - external grants
  - sale of documentary products:
    - documentary files
    - selective diffusion of information upon request
    - bibliographic bulletins
    - translations
    - documentary tools (e.g. thesaurus)
    - etc.
  - sale of services:
    - subscriptions: access fees, searching fees

- provision of primary documents
  - loan charges
  - photocopy services
  - electronic provision of documents
- on site and on line searching of databases
- audiovisual services: videotaping, photography
- etc.

Without application, a budget is useless. Thus, it is necessary to proceed to a regular (monthly) review of the budget which allows for the evaluation of actual income and expenses and allows these to be compared with the projected budget, showing any variance (*balanced budget* or *interim profit and loss statement*). It is often necessary, in the middle of the year, to introduce some changes and to modify the initial budget.

Finally, at the end of the year, a *global operating account* gathers all data and identifies the results of the year, be it in loss (deficit) or in profits, or, more commonly, in equilibrium. In some organisations it may be necessary for the information service to report to the parent body on the budget status and to have an independent audit of the finances on an annual basis.

Economic and financial analysis

Awareness of economic and financial data and of the human, technical and strategic factors allows for the creation and development of a sports information service and is essential for a clear appraisal of the situation and is necessary to make the right decisions.

In this sense, the two main tools concern the calculation of cost prices and the value analysis. The calculation of the cost price of an information service or product is essential in the process of decision-making concerning the opportunity or the future of a product or service.

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It allows for an improvement in productivity and for the choice between a policy of «doing» and one of «getting done» as well as for rate setting in charging. Costing of services and products should be carried out systematically and truthfully with all direct, indirect and hidden costs involved in the creation of the products and services identified and calculated.

The profit margin (income minus cost price) of a product or service determines its economic cost-effectiveness. The sum of all balances determines the gross margin of the information service, on which the parent organisation will base its information policy.

Value analysis contributes to obtaining the best balance between satisfying needs and product costs. It aims at satisfying users with the best quality products and services at a fair price and at optimising the services provided while avoiding waste.

1.12 INFORMATION
POLICIES

Policies are developed by organisations to provide a general plan of action and to give guidance as to what specific actions should take place. In the case of sport information or documentation centres there should be an overall policy document which sets out what the information service aims to do, who it aims to serve and broadly how this function will be carried out.

Policies are developed by organisations to provide a general plan of action and to give guidance as to what specific actions should take place. In the case of sport information or documentation centres there should be an overall policy document which sets out what the information service aims to do, who it aims to serve and broadly how this function will be carried out. By having an overall policy and then specific policies in relation to certain activities the information centre has a framework in which to operate which management, the staff of the information centre and importantly the clients of the information centre can easily understand.

Mission Statements

Perhaps the most important policy document, which an information centre should have, is the Mission Statement or the overall aim of the information centre. For example:

«The Information Centre's mission is to function as a central point for the collection, documentation, co-ordination and dissemination of multi-media sport information to support the personnel and programs of the College of Sports Education».

This mission statement answers three primary questions: What function does the information centre perform?; For whom does the information centre perform the function?; and How does the information centre go about fulfilling this function? In the case of the mission statement given above the information centre will provide - What?- sport information, to -Whom?- personnel and programs of the College of Sports Education, -How?- through the collection, documentation, co-ordination and dissemination of multi-media sport information.

A mission statement expresses the reason the information service exists in broad terms and predetermines the goals, objectives, strate-

gies and policies of an information service. It is essential that the mission statement for the information service is consistent with the mission statement and overall goals of the whole organisation. Ideally there will be a specific objective of the parent organisation, which will relate directly to the provision of information services for example in the case of the Australian Institute of Sport one of its overall organisational goals is:

'To collect and distribute information and provide advice on matters related to the activities of the Institute'.

It is clear from this goal that the activities of an information service would specifically relate to this overall goal of the Institute.

By having a broad mission statement the information service makes sure that what it does always meets the objectives of its parent organisation. In formulating a mission statement if the information services aims are not in line with those of the parent organisation then it is unlikely that the information service will survive and grow.

Once a mission statement has been formulated then it is important to recheck with key individuals in an organisation that this mission statement is acceptable and to have this statement endorsed. Having the mission statement accepted at the highest level in an organisation not only ensures that the information service is recognised by senior personnel in the organisation but also ensures that all future planning can be done on a solid foundation which has organisational acceptance.

If the information service being established has more than one staff member it is essential that all staff are committed to the mission statement and that they are involved in the subsequent planning of goals, objectives and

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strategies for the information service. A high level of involvement of staff in this planning process is likely to result in a situation where staff are totally committed to the information service and its success. Without staff who share the vision for the service there is little chance of the information service succeeding.

Once the broad aims of the information centre are agreed and are in place it is then possible to develop an annual management or business plan and to develop a range of specific policy documents, which set out the framework for the operation of the centre. There may be a variety of policies set within an information service such as Charging policies, Loan policies, Photocopying policies, Document exchange policies etc, the number of policies depending on the complexity of the operation of the centre. For purposes of this manual only a few of the key policies which are likely to be necessary in an information centre are set out below, there may be many more depending on the way that an information centre operates.

User Policies

User policies define who will use the service and what services they will receive. In some cases the user policy will define who will NOT be able to use the service. The user policy should identify all of the specific groups who are entitled to use the information service and what services they can expect to receive. In some cases the services provided to different users will be different for example in a physical education college academic staff may be provided with photocopies without a charge but students of the college may have to pay for photocopying.

Information Access/Acquisition or Selection Policies

These policies set out what categories of resources the information service will and will not acquire or provide access to. Generally information services list topics and indicate if they provide resources on that topic, to what level and how they provide the resources e.g. as books, journals, through online databases etc. This policy is important in determining the budget for resources, which the information service will need.

Documentary policy

Documentary policies indicate how the information service intends to treat the resources it acquires. This policy should indicate which types of resources will be indexed and catalogued, how resources will be stored, which resources will be retained indefinitely and which resources will be discarded.

Loan and Circulation Policy

This policy generally determines which categories of resources can be borrowed by whom and for how long. The circulation policy generally defines any materials, which will leave the information centre and be automatically circulated to particular users. Circulation services are often put in place for recently received journals although the decision to circulate must be considered within the context of the specific organisation being served.

By having clearly stated operational policies an information service has a framework of operation, which is understood, and these policies can then form the operational manual of the information service. Having such a manual of policies is critical to provide new information centre staff with details of how the service operates and the policy manual can be a useful tool to explain the operational framework to management and the clients of the information service.

Mechanisms should be put in place to revise policies as circumstances change, for example

there is no point in having a policy which states who will have access to the Medline data base on CD-ROM, if suddenly this data base becomes freely available on the Internet and is accessible by everyone in the organisations. Policies like strategic plans must be living documents which reflect the situations in which they operate.

It is important that policy documents are widely accessible and increasingly we are seeing policy documents for areas like information centres being placed within corporate Intranets where they are easily updated and are accessible to all staff at the same time.