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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

26 May 1969

Dr. John Olive
Director, AIBS
3900 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

Dear Dr. Olive:

Enclosed is a copy of a document which I have sent to Lamont Cole. While this is not intended to be complete, I do think that the paper more or less summarizes what I had in mind, and hopefully fits your own ideas for AIBS.

I expect to be here on June 2 and 3 and if you need to call for some enlightenment or enlargement on these ideas, I will be happy to supply further explanations or information. Needless to say I will be happy to know whether there was any action or reaction to this document.

Sincerely,

David J. Rogers
Professor of Biology

DJR:gm
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26 May 1969

Dr. LaMont Cole
Department of Ecology
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14850

Frsr Dr. Cole:

Here finally is the document I promised to send you. I hope that it says sufficient to you to be employed by you in the executive committee meeting. If this serves, but you expect to have questions about it during the discussion by the committee, I expect to be here on June 2 - 3 and I will be receptive to any questions from you by telephone.

I hope that something can be done along the lines proposed in this document. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David J. Rogers
Professor of Biology

DJR:gm

Some Thoughts on AIBS's Role in Coordinating and Supporting Activities
in Information Management in Biology

The need for coordinating information management activities in biology is rapidly becoming apparent in the biological community. Societies and individuals in several disciplines are making application to various granting agencies to support their investigations, pilot projects, systems development, etc., with the result that a considerable amount of confusion has been generated in the granting agencies as to how these separate applications fit into a larger scheme for all of biology. NSF-OSIS, for example, has already supported a number of "pilot" projects and systems development, but now they ask if the biologists can't get together in some way to use the various systems already developed, and thereby cut down on the cacaphony of voices.

While the desires of OSIS are certainly understandable, that biologists all come together to speak with one voice (as the voice of the chemists is the American Chemical Society) this is presently unrealistic. However, for large segments of the biological community, AIBS, given the right circumstances, could provide a voice for its portion of biology. The "right circumstances" are not fully known, but can be discovered, and I propose that AIBS begin to make this discovery, by the following procedures.

1. Establish a small, ad hoc group of informed specialists in biological information management to work "behind the scenes" in AIBS to chart some course for AIBS as an advisor both to its constituents and to the granting agencies. The group should not be large, and should have sufficient consistency to work together for some intensive period with the various officers of AIBS.

2. Charge the group to discover the objectives, the best working arrangements, and some way to identify the type of problems which members of AIBS have with respect to coordinating information management research activities. Also to discover means by which AIBS headquarters can identify knowledgeable individuals and/or groups of working information management specialists. This would serve to aid in getting those who need systems in contact with those who can provide information on the best sources of advice. This assumes that the working group will attempt to establish some operating procedures which will give AIBS officers the capacity to:

- a. identify problems in the community.
- b. point the problem at the specific part of the overall area of coordinated research where the most efficient and effective collaboration might occur.
- c. advise AIBS societies or individuals of research areas where some new development is required.
- d. stimulate the exchange of information, such as availability of information management systems, publications, cost/effectiveness, areas of required research, etc., within the AIBS community and between this community and the granting agencies.
- e. Recognize and endorse proposed research which will contribute to the completeness and efficiency of the coordinated research in the AIBS community.

A working group could help to set up some flow-chart for these objectives, at an intense, inter-active, week's work session at AIBS headquarters. They could be in touch not only with the working members of AIBS, but also with certain other knowledgeable individuals in such

organizations as BIOSIS, Chem Abstracts, staff of OSIS, et al.

After some intensive study the working group should make specific recommendations to AIBS as to how research might be coordinated within the biological community. These recommendations might include a work flow program, procedural flow charts, a proposed structure for a permanent administrative arm of AIBS for research coordination, the personnel and staffing needs for such an arm, and other considerations as might make themselves evident.

David J. Rogers
Professor of Biology
Director, Taximetrics Laboratory
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