September 1995

Innovations Affecting Us: OMNI, UMI, OVID

Norman Desmarais
Providence College

Judy Luther
ISI

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Recommended Citation

Desmarais, Norman and Luther, Judy (1995) "Innovations Affecting Us: OMNI, UMI, OVID," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 7: Iss. 4, Article 20.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1595>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Innovations Affecting Us

OMNI, UMI, OVID

Column Editors, **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College, Normd@Brownvm.brown.edu)
Judy Luther (ISI) (jluther@smtpgwy.isinet.com)

**** OMNI Magazine Shifts to Online Format****

With our attention focused on electronic journals of the scholarly kind, it's significant to see popular publications, like OMNI, converting from print to electronic.

OMNI, the consumer science fact and fiction magazine, will convert its monthly editions to iterative online information services and begin publishing special quarterly "super" editions this fall. The 17-year old OMNI will switch its popular features — including science coverage, technological and social speculation, interviews, fiction and commentary, to its **America Online** service, to other online ventures and a new service to be offered over the Internet, according to President and Chief Operating Officer **Kathy Keeton**. Additional plans call for the development of CD-ROM games and other interactive products.

Ms. Keeton noted that, "OMNI was one of the first science publications to be made available through **America Online** more than two years ago, and its more than enthusiastic acceptance by our readers has encouraged us in this decision. We have concluded that electronic publication, supplemented by high-quality print on a supportive basis, represents the future pathway for growth of this important brand name."

Special quarterly editions with expanded editorial content will be available only at newsstands and the **OMNI Comics**, a graphic science fiction publication launched earlier this year, will be offered on newsstands six times a year. Mail subscriptions to the magazine will be phased out beginning with the May issue.

According to Keeton, "the expansion of **American Online** into Europe and the increasing popularity of the Internet as a main artery of the Information Superhighway were compelling reasons for the decision to shift to an electronic publishing program."

OMNI was started by **General Media** founder and Chairman, **Bob Guccione**, together with Ms. Keeton, his wife, in 1978. General Media also publishes *Penthouse*, *Longevity*, *Four Wheeler* and more than a dozen other magazines. In addition, the company produces an electronic edition of the venerable publication *The Saturday Review* exclusively on **American Online**.

"OMNI has been a science journalism pioneer since the start," according to Ms. Keeton. "Among other things, the first use of the word 'cyberspace' appeared in OMNI in July 1982 in

a short story by **William Gibson**, and we have broken dozens of important stories."

Over the years, OMNI has won numerous awards for editorial excellence and has frequently been cited as a "hot" magazine by publishing trade journals. In just the past two years OMNI has been the recipient of the **American Institute of Physics Science Writing Award**, **The Olive Branch Award** for journalistic coverage of international security issues, a **Benjamin Franklin Award** for educational coverage, as well as numerous nominations and citations for its science fiction.

Lately OMNI has attracted attention and praise for **Project Open Book**, its investigative series aimed at cutting through the conspiratorial irrationalism and disinformation surrounding the UFO phenomenon and the inexplicable government cover-up.

**** For more information contact Jackie Markham or Robin Gold (212-702-6000 ext. 1901).**

****ProQuest Direct/UMI****

UMI has built its own client-server host system to "house" its vast collection of electronic information. People can dial in to obtain specific articles or to execute an information search across thousands of articles. Once they've located the pertinent information, they have several choices as to delivery method and article format.

ProQuest Direct is the first system to enable online access to such a sizable amount of information (more than a terabyte), across so many disciplines, in a variety of article formats and delivery options. For some information searches, an abstract may be sufficient and for others, the whole article may be needed. Customers will have a great deal of flexibility as to formats and the ways in which information is delivered. The choices will include UMI's abstract and index formats; ASCII text which is full text from the originally-published article which is fully searchable. The full image format is like an electronic snapshot of the article, with all original text, graphs, charts, and illustrations. The last option combines full text and image so that you get all of the original text in a fully searchable format along with the images that accompany it.

Initially the system will include material from more than 3,000 publications and summaries from more than 1,500,000

continued on page 80

Innovations Affecting Us from page 78

dissertations. Topics include information in the areas of business and management, general reference, news, technical data, social sciences, banking, accounting and tax, scholarly research.

Information can be delivered via online means, facsimile machine, to a remote printer, electronic mail (for ASCII text), regular mail and express mail. Another user-friendly feature is that as a mouse touches on the different article formats, a price tag window appears to show the cost.

ProQuest Direct is accessible through a modem with a local or toll-free call on standard telephone lines. High volume customers have the option of using dedicated communication lines as a high speed connection to the Ann Arbor data center. Since ProQuest Direct is TCP/IP compliant, customers can choose a value-added network service or the Internet.

Customers can access **ProQuest Direct** by subscribing to a group of publications, by transaction pricing or by a combination of the two. Transaction pricing essentially allows you to pay only for the information you need and want. A subscription package provides you with a fixed cost for access to and delivery from a defined searchable collection. A combination of the two provides universal access and a fixed cost for the majority of the information used. The system notifies users of results from outside the subscription set and informs them of the price to access and purchase those documents.

UMI made the decision to build such a system in early 1994. Consistent customer feedback illustrated the need for information systems that deliver extremely current data, offer depth and breadth of information and are delivered in a variety of formats. **ProQuest Direct** is in beta testing with more than 35 large academic and corporate customers this summer. Plans call for a September 1995 commercial launch.

••To learn more about ProQuest Direct, contact a UMI Sales Rep via 800-521-0600 ext. 2705.

****Ovid Technologies: Ovid Online: Core Biomedical Full Text Collection****

In recognition of their major software development, **CD PLUS** adopted **Ovid Technologies** as their official company name. Ovid offers a common user interface for DOS, Windows and Unix operating environments. It is the search engine for all local and network services and the heart of Ovid's online system.

June of this year witnessed the launch of **Ovid Online**, the latest addition to Ovid Technologies' growing set of information retrieval products and services. Providing access to more than 80 databases, **Ovid Online** allows customers to utilize the advantages of online searching while reaping the benefits of a full-screen Ovid interface.

The **Ovid** search software is amenable to all levels of searchers, regardless of their experience or expertise. Moreover, Ovid Online's pricing allows customers to choose from two co-existing pricing models: pay-as-you-go designed for less frequently searched databases while the fixed fee offers extended access to numerous databases.

In September, Ovid Technologies will release the **Core Biomedical Full Text Collection**, making the full text and graphics from fourteen of the world's leading biomedical journals accessible with advanced navigating, linking and searching capabilities. **Ovid Full Text** connects bibliographic searching with the

next stage in the research process, the retrieval of the actual article. The researcher leaves the workstation, not only with a set of citations, but often with the printed images of Ovid Full Text articles, as well.

The **Core Biomedical Collection** promises thorough searchability. Unlike other full text implementations, this innovative approach makes every word of a journal's text, including captions and cited references, fully searchable. Moreover, with the Windows version of the software, all tables, figures, and photographs — with definition equal to or greater than the originals — are viewable from any position in the text. These features are particularly important in scholarly research, where findings are often presented at the end of a document and where tables and illustrations conveniently capture the scope of a project.

The **Core Biomedical Collection** also possesses unprecedented linking capabilities. By clicking on hypertext, Collection searchers can link from a **MEDLINE** citation to the cited article's full text, at which point searchers can link either back to **MEDLINE** or directly to the full text of another document whose reference appears in the present article. Allowing researchers to negotiate their use of several sources far faster and more easily than if they were physically flipping through pages, hypertext links alone make electronic journals more valuable than their printed originals.

The full power of linking the citation database with the full text emerges from the actual research process. As articles are retrieved, the researcher can make decisions about the relevance of each article to the project at hand. The footnotes and bibliographies appearing in each full text article create an additional set of references. From a reference embedded in the full text, it is possible to link back to the **MEDLINE** citation associated with the new reference, and from this **MEDLINE** citation link to the new associated full text article. This dynamic research process follows the natural connections between articles, leading to more productive bibliographic research.

Expanding the utility of the familiar Ovid user interface, **Ovid Full Text** integrates three powerful tools. Software to support bibliographic research is combined with an innovative approach to the retrieval and navigation of electronic full text. This combination creates the third tool which exploits the natural links between full text and bibliographic databases in an exciting and novel way.

The benefits of **Ovid Full Text** will soon extend to other disciplines. In fact, now in development at Ovid Technologies are other discipline-specific full text collections devoted to research in such disparate fields as Engineering, Nursing/Allied Health, Psychology/Psychiatry, Biology/Biotechnology and the Humanities. Driven by Ovid's comprehensive search software, these collections individually provide full text access to the most important publications within their respective disciplines.

Ovid Technologies, Inc.'s mission is to provide platform independent access to bibliographic and full text databases for academic, biomedical and scientific research. To that end, the company has earned a reputation for pioneering innovative resource-sharing solutions that help libraries and other research facilities. Since its inception in 1986, the company has continued to introduce industry-setting standards including: advances in data compression; natural language "mapping" to controlled vocabulary; Novell PC-based networks; and UNIX-based campus-wide, regional and nationwide information systems.

••For more information on Ovid Online or Ovid Biomedical Full Text, contact the sales department at 800-950-2035 ext. 400.