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Pauling to write a Foreword for the Handbook a few years before he died. He described how he studied the Handbook in slack periods while he had a summer job during graduate school paving roads in Oregon. He attributed the beginning of his interest in chemical bonding to his speculations, from looking at Handbook tables, as to the reason for observed trends in physical and chemical properties.

SB: What is the process of producing each new edition? How many people are involved in it? Which institutions make an input (intellectual or financial) in it?

DL: As Editor-in-Chief I have had full responsibility for the content of the book — choice of topics, selection of data, and generation of the index. Each December, I send the new and revised sections, mainly in digital form, to CRC headquarters, where my files are converted to the CRC typesetting format. Their very efficient production group takes it from there, producing proofs for me to check and then assembling the old and new material to send to the printer. The books appear about six months after I submit the new material.

The new and revised tables come from two sources. First, I have assembled a group of experts in various fields who contribute to the book; about 30 of these are listed in the current edition, many from other countries. Some make a one-time contribution; others send regular updates every two or three years. I rely on the expertise of these contributors to select and evaluate the data, but I edit their submissions as needed to assure conformity to international recommendations on units, symbols, terminology, and chemical nomenclature. Secondly, I personally produce and update a number of tables in areas of science that I am familiar with. For this purpose I draw heavily on evaluated data compilations published by organizations such as NIST, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Government Agencies, and professional societies. The Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data and the reports from IUPAC projects are rich sources of high quality data. Here the main challenge is to select the most important compounds and materials from these very large databases, because space in the Handbook is always limited.

SB: Being the editor of such a publication comes with a great responsibility, because so many scientists rely on the accuracy of the data in it. What is the process of verifying the data published in the “Handbook?”

DL: Quality control is certainly a top priority, and I feel this is what distinguishes the CRC Handbook from the voluminous data sources that one can find, especially on the Internet. As pointed out in the previous answer, I use as many data as possible from secondary sources in which I have confidence, sources in which the data have been verified by going through a variety of tests such as those developed by the Standard Reference Data program at NIST.

SB: What is the process of verifying the data in it? Which institutions make an input (intellectual or financial) in it?

Unfortunately, the text does not provide specific details about the process of verifying the data or the involvement of different institutions in the intellectual or financial aspects of the Handbook.

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