

PDR developing "model license" for electronic journals

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At its recent 41st Annual General Meeting, the Pharma Documentation Ring, whose members represent the scientific information departments of 28 leading R&D-based pharmaceutical companies, reported progress on developing a model licensing agreement for electronic journals with representatives of scientific, technical and medical publishers.

It was noted that most PDR companies are now accessing a large number of scientific, technical and medical journals in electronic form, and that substantial differences in the individual licensing agreements with each publisher increase the overall administration needed to establish each new deal and monitor compliance with specific terms and conditions. It is hoped that the model agreement will reduce this administration.

The special theme of the meeting was the Intranet - the second generation. This was particularly timely, according to a PDR press statement, as several member companies are in the process of re-engineering and redeveloping their Intranets. Over the last few years, it said, PDR companies have learnt a great deal about how to design effective interfaces to published and proprietary information, and the new services being developed capitalize on this learning.

The statement went on to note that several information vendors are enhancing their products by providing links from secondary to primary sources and vice versa. This is seen as a valuable development by PDR representatives, though some concern was expressed that the linking may become somewhat fragmented, with some secondary sources deciding to provide links to only certain selected primary sources.

Such a situation could severely restrict the value of the links for R&D users of the services. It was agreed that linking should be the topic of a special PDR meeting to be held next spring. The 42nd PDR AGM will be held September 29, 2000, in Cheshire, UK, and will be hosted by AstraZeneca.