



Press Release

Current Challenges facing Information and Knowledge Management in the International Pharmaceutical Industry

43rd Annual General Meeting of the P-D-R

The Pharma Documentation Ring (P-D-R) held its 43rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Kent, UK from the 3rd - 5th October 2001. The P-D-R is an association whose members represent the scientific information departments of the leading R&D-based pharmaceutical corporations. The 24 companies represented account for approximately 60% of the total global turnover of ethical drugs.

This year's meeting, hosted by Pfizer, was attended by delegates from over 30 different sites in Europe and North America. Given the tragic events of September 11th in the US, it is a reflection of the importance of this meeting to P-D-R representatives and their companies that so many members made a special effort to attend the meeting. Bristol Myers Squibb participated in a P-D-R meeting for the first time. Mr Anton Theodorou of PharmaTransfer hosted an informal reception for delegates prior to the official opening of the meeting.

In his opening address, Sandy Mullen (Bayer AG), the President of the P-D-R discussed the omnipresent information explosion and the increasing use of the internet, the total amount of information available doubling every 3-5 years - the internet itself is expanding by 100% every 3 months. Nearly 60% of the US adult population now accesses the internet for an average of 10 hours each month. Although, much of the scientific information available on the Internet is of limited usefulness and questionable quality, the challenge to information professionals is to identify the useful sources via text mining and other techniques and thereby assist their users to find the solutions to the tasks at hand. Just as the Internet is growing rapidly, so is the quantity of information held in corporate intranets. It is a major challenge to classify and organise this information more effectively to facilitate later retrieval as well as to provide advice and training on what is relevant and where to find it. Improving information literacy within their organisation is becoming an important activity in several P-D-R companies.

This year's meeting format had been restructured to enable delegates to participate in smaller groups on topics that had been identified as of strategic interest. Four topics were discussed in two parallel streams

- Future Information Department Roles
- Impact of New Emerging Information Technologies
- Global Information Management
- Measuring what we are doing in the Information/Knowledge Management Areas

These more practical sessions proved particularly useful as there was a healthy and open discussion among delegates on the issues faced, the different approaches that had been tried, and an indication as to what had worked well and what had not. During these sessions, it emerged that a very broad set of new information related roles were being established within individual P-D-R Companies to deliver higher added value services to end users. There was overwhelming support for these strategic sessions to be held again in 2002 and the PDR Board agreed to identify further topics for discussion.

In the company reports sessions, the content of which is an excellent basis for informal benchmarking, it was apparent that several P-D-R companies continue to undergo major internal restructuring as a result of further merger and acquisition activity in this very active industry sector. The larger companies are putting considerable efforts into establishing global licences with scientific and technical publishers and database providers and an ever increasing number of electronic journals are being licensed and made available to R&D and other staff at all sites, particularly via the exploitation of linkage technology i.e. database records to e-articles.

Two external speakers gave presentations during the meeting. Clare Markillie (Editorial Development Manager, Pharmaprojects) described the changes that had taken place in Pharmaprojects to deliver improvements to the accuracy and timeliness of the information in this important drug pipeline file. Clare also went on to describe new web based solutions which will be made available to customers early in 2002. Rachel MacAdam (European Account Manager, Micropatent) outlined the enhancements that had been made to the patent coverage and full text search and display features of Micropatent. Rachel also reported that Micropatent were forming a number of alliances with other key information providers, to enable linking between the content from different sources.

P-D-R representatives had completed a questionnaire on Newsfeeds prior to the AGM. The analysis of the results showed that a large number of both fee-based and gratis services are being used within P-D-R Companies. Each newsfeed service was assessed for content, usability and cost. In the streaming newsfeed section, Bloomberg and News Edge Insight were the preferred sources. In the Pharmaceutical News section, Scrip and Prous Daily Essentials were viewed as delivering the most comprehensive content, though Marketletter and Prous Daily Essentials were seen as the most cost

effective sources. Marketletter had the most consistent overall rating in terms of coverage, cost and user-friendliness . An analysis of the information from these sources revealed that an increasing percentage of the content was freely available, though without some of the added value comment.

An important recent development discussed during the meeting was the adoption of the Directive on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society by the European Council of Ministers. The Directive entered into effect in June 2001, and member states have until December 22, 2002, to incorporate the Directive into National Law. The implementation of the Directive is likely to have cost implications for the Library Groups within PDR Companies.

The 44th PDR AGM will be held on 8th - 11th October 2002, in Newmarket, Sussex, England and will be hosted by Glaxo SmithKline.

In summary, it was a highly successful meeting and a survey conducted amongst attendees indicated there had been, once again, a very high level of relevant and quality presentations by PDR members and invited speakers. This meeting is regarded by many participants as the major annual event of its type for the pharmaceutical industry.

The PDR web site can be found at <http://www.p-d-r.com>.