TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY
RESEARCH REVIEW:
TOPIC: COMPUTERIZED DATABASES,
SPECIALIZED COLLECTIONS,
AND ARCHIVES

David Lukoff
San Francisco, California

Francis G. Lu
San Francisco, California

Important research tools in any field of inquiry are computerized databases, specialized collections and archives from which to access information previously published. For example, in our initial effort on researching mystical experience for this Journal (1988), we utilized the main computerized databases of PSYC INFO, MEDLINE, SOCABSTRACTS, ERIC, and the RELIGION INDEX to obtain 40 key references. Although these computerized databases were a very efficient way to obtain references updating research on the mystical experience, we also encountered a number of difficulties. Subject headings overlooked basic transpersonal concepts, and only the standard psychological and medical journals were indexed. Yet researching transpersonal topics requires an interdisciplinary approach. For example, in studying shamanic and other healing states of consciousness, anthropological research is extremely relevant. In studying meditation, journals in religion and spiritual texts are important. In studying psychedelic experiences and creativity, art journals and periodicals are helpful.

As a result, researchers on transpersonal topics have frequently turned to creating their own collections of interdisciplinary research articles and compiling archives of historically impor-

Copyright © 1989 Transpersonal Institute
tant documents. Searching the standard computerized databases is generally a necessary, but not sufficient, step in obtaining references to past research on transpersonal topics. Roberts (1989) lists eight collections with over 1000 references that have been compiled, for the most part, in the writing of books on transpersonal topics. These reference lists cover: meditation, hypnosis, biofeedback, psychedelic drugs, dreams, imagery, behavioral medicine, and psychoneuroimmunology. Roberts also includes references for less extensive but significant listings on: yoga, near-death experience, perinatal psychology, MDMA, acupuncture, peak and mystical experiences, out-of-the-body experiences, psychokinesis and reincarnation.

We wondered if computerized databases, specialized collections and archives that were accessible to the public existed. In early 1989, we mailed a questionnaire to 50 leaders in transpersonal psychology to ascertain their knowledge of resources for research in the field. This article describes the largest of these private collections and archives that we learned about, and also provides a progress report on the development of computerized reference databases in transpersonal psychology. We contacted and interviewed the key developers of each of these informational resources to obtain current information on the purpose, scope and content, history and staffing, record format, method of storage, and accessibility. Although many of the collections and archives are the private libraries of serious scholars, they all share a common goal to eventually make their resources available to researchers. However, a major obstacle at this point is financial. The computerized databases, collections and archives are described below in chronological order of development.

THE FITZ HUGH LUDLOW MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Purpose: The Fitz Hugh Ludlow Memorial Library is the first and one of the largest collections and historical archives for the study of psychoactive drug use in contemporary and historical societies. The Library was created on the premise that, "a truthful understanding of psycho-active drug use in Western and Eastern cultures cannot be gained if neglected, forgotten, or ephemeral works are out of reach of the serious scholar." It is named for the author of the first American book on drug use (The Hasheesh Eater, 1857).

Scope and Content: The curators collect primarily from sources frequently overlooked by medical, technical and general institutional libraries. The Library consists of over 6000 books and many thousands of pamphlets, journals,
archival papers, manuscripts, letters, records, tapes, photographs, engravings, posters, comic books, and a wide variety of artifacts. Much of the literature emphasizes first-hand accounts of psychoactive drug experience, from DeQuincey, Baudelaire and Ludlow to Huxley, Leary and Burroughs. Official studies such as the Indian Hemp Commission's Report on Marijuana from 1894, the testimony given at the 1937 Congressional Hearing on religious use of peyote, symposiums on LSD from the 1960s, and first editions of seminal works from the 1700's and 1800's to the present are also in the collection. Other areas include pharmacology, psychopharmacology, ethnobotany, sociology, and law enforcement.

History and Staffing: The Library was established in 1970 by a group of drug historians and bibliophiles. A Board of Directors oversaw the development of the collection and its use from 1970-1981 when it was located in San Francisco and served as the site of many countercultural events. Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer are the key developers of this archive.

Record Format: Documents are stored as full texts in their original condition. A full inventory and development of a computerized catalog system is underway.

Method of Storage: As of October 1989, the Library itself is in storage.

Accessibility: The Library is not functioning for use by researchers. The Library helped publish a series of books including Shaman Woman, Mainline Lady: Women's Writings on Drug Experience, and Moksha: Huxley's Writings on Psychedelic and Visionary Experience (both edited by Michael Horowitz and Cynthia Palmer), and An Annotated Bibliography of Timothy Leary by Horowitz, Karen Walls and Billy Smith.

A spin-off of the Library is a mail order book-selling service, Flashback Books, which publishes occasional catalogs of books, journals, magazines, phonograph records and graphics available for purchase. The focus is similar to the Fitz Hugh Ludlow Memorial Library: the use of psychoactive drugs as an area of human thought and expression that has been an underground current in many societies. Only older and hard-to-find printed material are carried, including books by Alan Watts, Timothy Leary, Andrew Weil, Stan Grof and Ralph Metzner. Topics such as psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy and shamanism are well-represented. Write: Flashback Books, 906 Samuel Dr., Petaluma, CA 94952 for further information.
Purpose: The Esalen Institute Study of Exceptional Functioning explores various kinds of exceptional and supernormal functioning and the bodily transformations that support them. The project is compiling a broad collection of scientific, anecdotal, and speculative literature related to this area.

Scope and Content: The project collection contains nearly 10,000 references from medical, scientific, and scholarly journals; esoteric sources; anecdotal reports; chapters of books; monographs; and conference proceedings related to exceptional functioning. In addition to standard computer searches, the project has drawn on the archives of Dr. Elmer Green of the Menninger Foundation, Rhea White of the American Society for Psychical Research, and many private sources.

History and Staffing: This project was initiated in 1976 by Esalen co-founder Michael Murphy and Jim Hickman. Steven Donovan, now President of Esalen Institute, has continued to develop the project. Margaret Livingston currently assists in maintaining the collection.

The inspiration for the project was Michael Murphy's novel *Jacob Atabet* in which the character Darwin Fall created a similar collection. It has been supported by Esalen Institute and numerous private contributors.

Record Formal: The studies are arranged under the uniterm system of indexing using 5-15 code words per reference.

Method of Storage: A copy of the indexed materials is maintained at the collection.

Accessibility: Although not available to researchers at present, the collection staff intends to make it accessible in the future.

A major product of the collection is a monograph *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation* (1988) edited by Michael Murphy and Steven Donovan. It is a comprehensive review of contemporary meditation research with a bibliography of 1,200 entries covering the period from 1931 through 1988. Virtually all the references are from the collection. The review summarizes the outcomes of meditation under physiological effects, behavioral effects, and subjective reports. An earlier version of the monograph appeared in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1989, Vol. 21, No.2.
*Transpersonal Psychology* (1983). The project staff are planning an updated edition of the monograph every 3-5 years.

Michael Murphy’s new book *The Future of the Body* (September, 1991) will utilize many references from the collection to provide additional understanding in this area. Included topics will be contemplative life, multiple personality, biofeedback, hypnosis, shamanism, sport, and spiritual healing.

For further information, contact Esalen Institute Study of Exceptional Functioning, 230 Forbes Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.

**PARAPSYCHOLOGY SOURCES OF INFORMATION CENTER**

*Purpose:* The Parapsychology Sources of Information Center (PSI Center) serves “as a clearinghouse for information on research findings, theories, organizations, publications, and personnel involved in parapsychology and consciousness studies.”

*Scope:* The PSI Center has several computerized databases of interest to transpersonal psychologists.

The *Psiline* database covers the literature of parapsychology and psychical research from approximately 1940 to date. Not only journal articles are included but also books, Chapters, separate research reports, conference papers, and theses. There is a broad band of the parapsychological literature that overlaps with transpersonal psychology including studies of self-actualization, meditation and other altered states of consciousness, possession, multiple personality, and synchronicity.

The *ConStudy* database contains articles, books, and chapters on consciousness studies that emphasize research, methodological and theoretical works on mysticism, altered states, the role of the observer in science, and issues pertaining to the mind-body problem. The main journals included to date are *Brain Mind Bulletin; Essence; Imagination, Cognition and Personality; Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion; Journal of Altered States of Consciousness; Journal of Humanistic Psychology; Journal of Mental Imagery; Journal of Transpersonal Psychology; Noetic Sciences Review; Omega; Journal of Death and Dying; Parabola; Phoenix: Journal of Transpersonal Anthropology; Re Vision; Somatics; Studies in Formative Spirituality,* and *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science.*
The *Transcend* database, unlike the preceding two, is not primarily bibliographic. It consists of verbatim accounts of transpersonal experiences, emphasizing mystical, peak, and other experiences of transcendence and creative inspiration as well as firsthand accounts of peak performance. *Transcend* was initiated in the Summer of 1989 and so does not yet contain enough cases to be of use to researchers. It will include both published and unpublished cases and, if funding is forthcoming, cases described in interviews conducted primarily by Margaret Livingston. The PSI Center already has hundreds of cases to enter into the areas of peak sports performance and creativity based on earlier research for the book Rhea White co-authored with Michael Murphy entitled *The Psychic Side of Sports* and from an investigation of creativity under the direction of Gardner Murphy. A set of descriptors is still being compiled. In addition to the case accounts, *Transcend* will contain as much additional information as possible regarding the person: age, sex, personality characteristics, triggers of the experience, and especially the aftereffects, if any. Anyone wishing to contribute cases should send them to the PSI Center at the address below.

**History and Staffing:** The PSI Center was founded in 1983 by Rhea A. White, a reference librarian and parapsychologist. She is director of the Center and heads all of its operations. She is aided by several part-time clerical assistants. The current version of *PsiLine* was initiated in 1985 and *ConStudy* in 1987. *Parapsychology Abstracts International* began publication in 1983. Ms. White has authored several books and is the editor of the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* and is a past president of the Parapsychological Association. The PSI Center is equipped with 7 IBM-compatible computers, 2 copiers, a dot matrix printer and a laser printer. Two grants received in 1989, one for the work of the PSI Center and one earmarked for *Transcend*, have been of great assistance in forwarding the Center's work and its ability to cooperate with other researchers and organizations.

**Record Format:** Both the *PsiLine* and *ConStudy* databases have the same record format. It consists of bibliographic information (author, title, source); abstracts; additional information (number of figures, illustrations, graphs, tables, references, etc.); the discipline of the source journal; the language of the original document; the document type (book, chapter, conference paper, journal article, thesis, etc.); the document format (review article, experimental report, theoretical, editorial, letter, etc.); descriptors (subject headings); identifiers.
Each Transcend record has fields for the name of the person (or a pseudonym if preferred); address; telephone number; whether or not the PSI Center has permission to make the experience public; occupation; primary source; secondary sources; corroborational information; interview; description of the experience; triggers; physical concomitants of the experience; mental and emotional concomitants of the experience; aftereffects; descriptors; additional comments; and document number.

Method of Storage: Records for the three databases are stored in three computers. Text retrieval software is a MS-DOS program called TEXTBANK produced by Group L in Herndon, VA. Backups are made on floppy disks or magnetic tape and are stored in two locations. Most of the items cited in the databases are owned by the PSI Center and are stored in file cabinets in numerical order.

Accessibility: A Search Request form is available for ordering searches of Psi.ine and ConStudy but it is not necessary. What is required is a detailed description of the search question and the reason for which it is needed. Requests can be mailed or telephoned. Output can be sorted alphabetically and chronologically by year and is available in the form of a printout on fanfold paper or on a 360k disk, a 1.2 disk, or a 720k disk. Fees are 50 cents per minute for computer time, including printing (usually 5-20 minutes) and $5.00 per disk. (Computer time is greatly reduced if disks are accepted.)

Parapsychology Abstracts International is a semiannual journal that contains about 350 abstracts per issue of recent material that will then be put into Psi.ine. Each issue has a very extensive index. It reviews 15 books in the area of consciousness studies per issue. Parapsychology Abstracts International is $35 per year for individuals ($25 for members of the Association of Transpersonal Psychology).

Reviews in Consciousness and Transcendence, to be initiated in late 1991, will be a list of reviews of books in the area of consciousness studies and transpersonal psychology over the last 30 years. Each entry consists of the full bibliographic information about the book, followed by a list of review citations, including the name of the reviewer. It will serve not only as a source of reviews but as a record of book publication.
SPONTANEOUS REMISSION PROJECT

Purpose: The objective in gathering a collection of articles from medical journals is to determine how strong a case exists for the existence of the phenomenon of spontaneous remission from life-threatening diseases. The compilation of documented cases from established medical journals is aimed to challenge the medical community. Accounts of spontaneous remission have often been dismissed as artifacts of misdiagnosis or placebo effects. By establishing this collection in one place, medical professionals and other researchers can take a closer and more critical look at the evidence for spontaneous remissions. If it can be established that individuals are capable of extraordinary self-repair capacities, then the collection can also be used to generate hypothesized mechanisms. Learning how to arouse such disease-fighting abilities can unravel the mechanisms of living a longer and healthier life.

Scope: Over 3500 articles in 20 languages from 830 medical journals have been accumulated to date, making it the world's largest collection on spontaneous remission. The collection is still in the process of being expanded and updated. The standard medical databases, such as Index Medicus, have been used to locate articles from 1966. To obtain references to earlier articles, the Spontaneous Remission Project staff have conducted hand searches of the reference lists contained in the more recent articles. Science Citation Index was also used to locate references.

History and Staffing: Brendan O'Regan, a neurochemist who is Vice President for Research at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), started the Spontaneous Remission Project in 1986. Two full-time staff are employed in collecting and maintaining the collection of articles. Its activities have been supported by private individuals, foundation grants and IONS.

Record Format: The author(s), title, source, and abstract for
each article are entered into a computerized database. Extracted case reports from the best articles are also stored in this database.

**Method of Storage:** Hard copies of the journal articles are stored in files at IONS. A Macintosh with hard disk is used to maintain the computerized database.

**Accessibility:** The Spontaneous Remission collection and computerized database are not currently available to outside researchers, although Brendan O'Regan would like to make it accessible in the future. However, there are mechanical and financial issues that would need to be resolved. Although he states that all the articles are not yet in the database, several reports have been published by the Spontaneous Remission Project. An annotated bibliography, containing both the best cases in different categories of illness and excerpts of their case reports along with additional references, will soon be published in book form. For ordering information about the articles or book contact IONS, PO Box 909, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 331-5650.

**CENTERLINK INFORMATION SERVICES**

**Purpose:** "Center Link Information Services, Inc., is dedicated to a deeper understanding of the healing process; that is, the process by which physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies work to promote healing." CenterLink is an outgrowth of the concern that, despite the explosion of global knowledge about healing, worldwide dialogue about theories and therapies suffers from increasing specialization, fragmentation and the isolation of critical "linkage thinkers." Their goal is to create a computerized database that will permit an integration of these many fragments of theory and fact, thereby fostering holism in healing. Current database search technology is based on key words and Boolean algebra ("and or" combinations of terms). However, a new software search program called TOPIC by Verity Corporation in Mountain View, California, allows searching by weighted words and by concepts. CenterLink is planning to use this software to generate search specific ratings of paragraphs or pages within articles that the researcher can use to much more efficiently fine tune and guide their searches. These new artificial intelligence derived computer science database search technologies can enable CenterLink both to bridge the many "expert systems" of thought and language in the healing community and to facilitate dialogue among both specialists and linkage thinkers.
**Scope and Content:** Conceived of as a venture in electronic publishing, CenterLink is designed as a full-text database, rather than a bibliographic database. Entire articles, chapters and books on theory, therapies and case studies will be stored using optical scanners. In addition, to facilitate linking, information on key centers and practitioners will also be incorporated. Thus, researchers, teachers, psychologists, physicians, ministers and therapists will be enabled to cut across specialized languages and locate both data and people who can respond to their interests.

The initial core database is projected at approximately 500,000 pages of material drawn from books, magazines, journals and unpublished reports. The CenterLink Editorial Board held a 3 day meeting to survey approximately 40,000 titles of books in the field of integrated healing and recommended 6,000 titles for addition to the database. As a demonstration of their model, CenterLink has prepared a prototype database of 2000 pages on AIDS and one of 4000 pages on psychoneuroimmunology. The Bible and *Course in Miracles* have also been placed into the database. Search software is being developed to allow students to work simultaneously with both publications and compare their spiritual concepts.

**History and Staffing:** CenterLink is seeking $1,000,000 and has prepared a report describing its objectives for foundations. It was launched in 1984 by William Whitson, Ph.D., who continues to serve as the Chairman of the Board of Directors. He is a consultant to government and private clients in the application of noetic principles to decision-making, primarily in the fields of stress, crisis management and finance, and is a director of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. He has authored several articles and books on foreign and defense policy and crisis management. The President and CEO of CenterLink is rvoi Whitson (no relation to William) who provides expertise in publishing. He was formerly the President and CEO of American Elsevier Publishers and E.P. Dutton. In addition to the Board of Directors, there is an Advisory Board of distinguished experts in the fields of religion, science, inner development, and computer technologies.

The proposal projects a staff of four data input employees as well as secretarial, editorial and technical staff hired over a 3 year period to establish the core database.

**Record Format:** The full text of selected documents will be maintained in the computerized database. The format and retrieval system are under development.
Method of Storage: Texts will be transferred directly from printed material onto a hard disk using optical scanners. Both IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers are being utilized. The prototype database is now resident on CenterLink computers near White Plains, NY.

Accessibility: As of October 1989, the database is only available for demonstration purposes to potential funding sources. However, the full text version of the Course in Miracles along with search software is available for purchase. Yet to be worked out is the method by which copyrights and royalties for the use of documents in the database will be negotiated and handled.

For further information, contact Bill Whitson, 43 Cliff Rd, Belvedere, CA 94920 or (415) 435-4671.

ALBERT HOFMANN FOUNDATION

Purpose: "The primary objective of the organization is to establish and maintain a world information center and research library devoted to the scientific study and exploration of human consciousness, including related areas such as: psychiatry, psychopharmacology, ethnobotany, art, anthropology, theology and creativity." The non-profit Albert Hofmann Foundation has plans for developing a library, art gallery and conference center. The foundation will also serve to educate the public about alterations in consciousness through lectures, workshops, seminars, conferences and newsletters.

Scope and Content: Although broadly based in the study of consciousness, the Albert Hofmann Foundation is beginning its collection by focusing on materials related to the psychedelic revolution ushered in by Dr. Hofmann's discoveries. This movement had lasting effects on all areas of society including psychology, literature, art and music. Thousands of articles and hundreds of books have been published on psychedelics. Much of this material is isolated and scattered and will be lost or destroyed unless collected and organized. The Foundation intends to collect and preserve this valuable resource for future generations of researchers and historians.

The library will also function as an archive housing historically significant books, papers, tape recordings, correspondence and news clippings as well as art. Materials promised from Oscar Janiger, Allen Ginsberg, Laura Huxley, Stan Grof, Terence McKenna, Jay Stevens and Marty Lee, as well as many others.
who have been seminal figures or scholars in this area provide a solid beginning.

History and Staffing: The inauguration of the Foundation occurred in 1988 and marked the 50th anniversary year of the first synthesis of LSD by Dr. Hoffman. Oscar Janiger, a pre-eminent LSD researcher, and Robert Zanger, a consciousness researcher, co-founded the Foundation and function as Vice President and President, respectively. Most of the staffing is by volunteers who help with cataloging materials, producing a newsletter, and organizing conferences and fundraising events. Most of the pioneers in consciousness research are advisors to the Foundation and are actively involved in the archival activities of the Foundation.

Record Format: When the library is up and running, it will include a computerized database "card catalog" with author, title, and subject descriptors for all materials. This will be available on-line via modem to interested scholars and researchers.

Method of Storage: Initially the library materials will be stored in their original condition as books and articles. As funding permits, abstracts of all materials and full text versions of selected materials will be stored on computer and be available via modem. A final decision about hardware for this computerized reference database has not been made.

Accessibility: The Foundation is committed to maximizing access to their materials which will be available to scientists and scholars as well as the public. Fundraising is underway to permit the purchase of a suitable site for housing the collection. An interactive computer bulletin board, which will use a Macintosh computer with hard disk, is planned to be on-line in early 1990. This will provide researchers with rapid dissemination of information about preliminary results, works-in-progress, funding sources and relevant conferences.

The Foundation also distributes audiocassettes from their conferences and lectures by leading figures from human consciousness studies. Also available is a Festschrift in honor of Albert Hofmann entitled *The Gateway to Inner Space* and edited by Christian Ratsch, with articles summarizing the past and projecting the future of consciousness research. Supporting memberships, which include a quarterly newsletter updating the progress of this archive and database, are available from: The Albert Hofmann Foundation. 132 West Channel Rd, Suite 324, Santa Monica, CA 90402.
CONCLUSIONS

We believe the independent development of computerized databases, specialized collections and archives by many investigators enhances the quality and depth of research in transpersonal psychology. Hopefully it will promote research efforts which build upon methodologies and results of past studies. In the case of research on mystical experience, and in many other areas of transpersonal psychology, we have observed a lack of continuity in the research. Investigators often seem unaware of findings, measures and parallel research in other disciplines.

Anticipated breakthroughs in computer technology may allow for a rapid expansion of data storage and retrieval possibilities. For example, Bill Whitson’s projected use of optical scanners simplifies and reduces the cost of storing full text documents, and his planned use of artificial intelligence software to guide searches expands the range of disciplines and sources that can be searched for any given topic. Researchers will benefit from having greater access to critical sources both inside and outside of their fields. These new technologies complement more traditional bibliographic services such as Rhea White’s Con­study computerized database, and the hard copy collections of the Esalen Institute Study of Exceptional Functioning and the Fitz Hugh Ludlow Memorial Library.

Hopefully the developers of these computerized databases, collections and archives will continue to share both their visions and their practical ideas, as many of them already do with each other. Transpersonal psychology will benefit greatly from a coordinated effort toward establishing these informational resources. The present authors also invite readers to submit information about this topic.

REFERENCES


Requests for reprints to David Lukoff, Ph.D” Saybrook Institute, 1550Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.