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# Savannah River Site Technical Library

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## SAVANNAH RIVER SITE TECHNICAL LIBRARY

By C. Tom Sutherland

### INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Savannah River Site (SRS) Technical Library Staff is to develop, administer, and maintain a library collection to support the programmatic activities of the SRS, and to provide library services for the staff of the Westinghouse Savannah River Company (WSRC), Department of Energy-Savannah River (DOE-SR), and other site contractors.

### BACKGROUND

Following the explosion of the U.S.S.R.'s first atomic bomb in 1950, President Harry S. Truman asked the E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company to design, build, and operate a nuclear facility to produce tritium and plutonium for national defense. The Du Pont Company was selected because of their success in building and operating the Hanford plant during World War II as part of the Manhattan Project, the crash effort by the United States to build atomic bombs. After conducting a country-wide search, Du Pont and the Atomic Energy Commission selected a 300-square-mile site in South Carolina on the Savannah River midway between Aiken, SC, and Augusta, Georgia. Original construction at the Savannah River Plant, as it was then known, included the following facilities:

- five nuclear reactors for irradiation of materials, which used heavy water to moderate the nuclear reaction.

- two chemical separations plants, where the radioactive isotopes could be separated into their various chemical components. Separations are performed by remote operation so that the operators are not exposed to radioactivity. This concept had been pioneered at Hanford.
- a fuel facility, where the reactor fuel and targets were made.
- a heavy water extraction plant, which isolated heavy water from ordinary or light water. (There is about one ounce of heavy water in a 55-gallon drum of ordinary water.)(1)

Du Pont operated the Savannah River Plant and Laboratory until 1989, when the Westinghouse Electric Company took over as the prime contractor for the Department of Energy (DOE). Also in 1989, the Plant was renamed the Savannah River Site (SRS) and, in 1992, the Laboratory was renamed the Savannah River Technology Center (SRTC). The SRTC has machine and glass shops, shielded facilities, a robotics laboratory, and the site library. The machine and glass shops make equipment for experiments. The shielded facilities permit radioactive experiments by remote control, without exposing personnel to radiation. Robots can work in radioactive zones and reduce operator exposure.

The mission of the Savannah River Site remains as it was in the beginning, to make plutonium and tritium for national defense. The recent collapse of the

U.S.S.R. demonstrates the effectiveness of the national defense efforts, including those of the DOE weapons complex. (2)

### TECHNICAL LIBRARY

The Technical Library provides library services for the site and the 24,000 employees located there. The library staff consists of three professionals and six clerks (Figure 1). The Savannah River Technical Library Logo combines the library symbol and a stylized atom to represent nuclear activities (Figure 2). The collection has almost 30,000 books and over 500 subscriptions to scientific and technical journals. Eighty-five percent of the books in the collection contain scientific or technical subjects-- physics, chemistry, and nuclear engineering being the most common. Another 40,000 books and 1,500 subscriptions ordered through the library are held by various operating departments, and are indexed in the online catalog.

#### Services

The library provides normal reference services and extensive online searching of the scientific and technical literature. The library is also the site ordering agent for books, journals, reports, patents, and translations.

#### Catalog

The online catalog uses the TECHLIB software, an integrated online library system from Information Dimensions, Inc. The catalog may be accessed from anywhere onsite, provided one has been issued the necessary password. However, even on a very sophisticated site, not everyone has all the necessary knowledge or access privileges.

News stories let us know that passwords and security measures do not seem to deter hackers, but they can provide a great hindrance to legitimate users.

A variety of different techniques have been tried to make access to the online catalog easier. One of the first efforts was a touch screen monitor with colorful icons for searching. The intent was that any patron could just walk up to the terminal and use it. The color monitor attracted attention. The display, which invited patrons to touch an icon to initiate the search, was more inviting and less intimidating than a blank screen or even a menu. Figure 3 shows this display. Unfortunately, a routine in the graphical interface software that could not be disabled turns off the display after thirty minutes and the next patron has to sign on again.

The Technical Library also maintains a backup catalog ("MacBackup") on a Macintosh computer (Figure 4). Author, title, call number, subject, series, and publisher information for the library's book collection are loaded in call number order. MacBackup operates on Hypercard and provides a string search of the entered word or phrase. Since the records are in shelf-list order, scrolling the display is similar to browsing a shelf. MacBackup does not provide an index, or tell how many hits, or allow Boolean logic searching; but it also does not require a computer ID, is intuitive, and is completely independent of the mainframe. Thus, there is a catalog when the mainframe is unavailable, or for the patron without a computer ID. Even though there is over 95% availability of the mainframe, sometimes there are problems with communications links or terminals,

or electric power, or even the mainframe computer (Figure 4).

Another finding aid that the Library provides is a series of printouts sorted by author, title, subject, and series. These are one line per book listings of the call number and the pertinent field or search term. The single line per book makes for a very compact listing. If a full catalog record were used, the printouts would occupy several shelves.

### Marketing

The library has promoted the use and availability of its services through a variety of efforts. The staff has written guides and pamphlets about the library and how to use the online catalog. National Library Week stories are placed in the Site newspaper, and, in 1992, the monthly video magazine provided a four-minute feature about the library. The site librarians participate in the weekly orientation meetings for new employees. The library staff has also issued occasional one- or two-page fliers summarizing information about the library. Our experience has been that each effort is useful, since each seems to reach a different audience, or one that somehow missed an earlier effort.

### Library Committee

The library has been enthusiastically supported by an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives of the various supported disciplines—engineering, physics/material science, chemistry, mathematics/computer science, and environmental sciences (geology, meteorology, biology). The committee is responsible for reviewing the existing collection, advising on collection

development, serving as patron representatives, and reporting annually to SRTC management on the state of the library.

### Future

The Savannah River Site is part of the DOE nuclear weapons complex. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, DOE has announced intentions to reconfigure to a smaller, less diverse and less expensive complex to be in place by the beginning of the next century, and known as Complex 21. These changes will obviously have an impact on the Technical Library, especially its collection development. Emphasis on nuclear reactors and isotope separation is expected to shift to waste management and environmental remediation. Renewed emphasis on compliance has resulted in increased collection of regulations, laws, and standards. Space limitations as well as enhanced search capabilities are making CD-ROM databases and references more attractive to the library. Other changes will also be necessary and more apparent as the SRS Technical Library becomes part of Complex 21.

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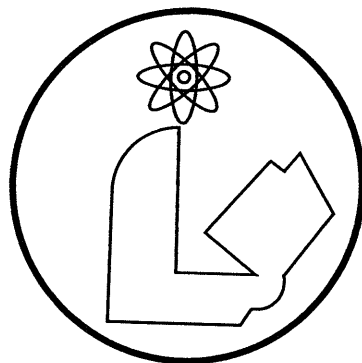
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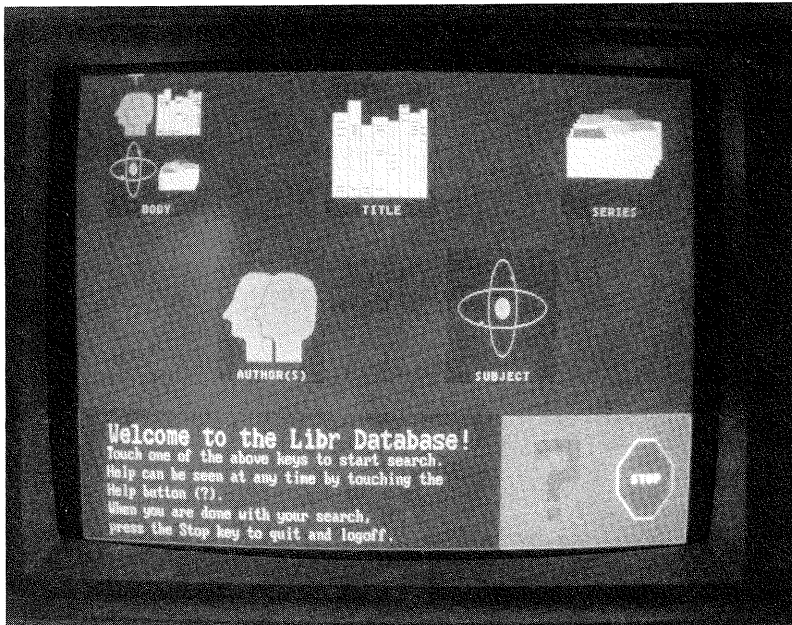
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**Figure 1.** The SRS Technical Library Staff



**Figure 2.** Savannah River Technical Library Logo



**Figure 3.** Startup Display for the Touch Screen Terminal



**Figure 4.** MacBackup