

## Physicists on-line with Pi-NET

Physicists have long pioneered new ways of communicating science: letters journals, preprints, page charges. The latest scheme for communications is the American Institute of Physics Pi-NET, a physics information network, which recently went on-line via GTE Telenet, a public communications network. Pi-NET is designed to meet the informational needs of our member societies by providing a central channel of access to a variety of databases. During the one-year pilot project, we at AIP invite you to use the system and to help us develop Pi-NET to its full potential by sharing suggestions and comments with us.

The following explanation of Pi-NET's database categories demonstrates how AIP member societies are participating in Pi-NET:

- The Job Opportunities file contains the listings that are regularly sent in printed form to graduate physics departments by the AIP Manpower Placement Service. Member societies may soon be adding their own job listings; discussions are currently under way with the American Astronomical Society to incorporate their job notices.
- The Calendar of Meetings file contains an electronic version of the PHYSICS TODAY listing of meetings, as well as the epitomes and other information on selected meetings. The American Physical Society is experimenting with putting schedules of speakers and programs on-line as soon as they are known.
- The Advance Abstracts file permits early access to abstracts of articles accepted for publication in AIP and most member-society journals. The abstracts are available at least two months before publication. The Pi-NET files do not yet contain abstracts of those member-society journals not published by AIP; however, the Optical Society of America (among other societies) plans to include its abstracts soon.
- The Journal Article Titles file, in conjunction with the Advance Abstracts file, provides users with a means to track articles of interest to them. The database lists title, first author, journal and page number for each article in the Advance Abstracts file; the information will remain on-line for six months after publication.
- The Membership and Publications file makes possible on-line ordering by credit card of journals, books, conference proceedings, reprints of individual articles and videotapes of selected talks at AIP's Corporate Associates meetings.
- The Announcements and News Releases file can be read as an electronic "newsmagazine." The bulletins, press releases and conference summaries are contributed by AIP as well as by any society wishing to post a news

item or announcement of interest to the physics community. For example, the weekly "What's New" column, prepared by Robert Park of the APS Office of Public Affairs in Washington, DC, relays pertinent news from the Federal government.

As more and more physicists gain access to computer terminals with telecommunications capabilities, the feasibility of member-society participation becomes apparent. In anticipation of increasing interest in Pi-NET we are exploring the following future additions to the system: accepting advance meeting registrations and receiving abstracts of meeting talks on-line; adding a separate file of tables of contents of journals published by AIP and its member societies; setting up job interviews at AIP and member-society placement centers via computer; coupling the on-line services with optical-disk editions of full texts of journal articles, back files of journals of abstracts, and address and telephone directories of physicists and astronomers; and having Pi-NET serve as a gateway to other databases such as *Physics Briefs*, *Chemical Abstracts*, *Biological Abstracts*, the *Official Airline Guide* and *American Men and Women in Science* (assuming the appropriate commercial arrangements can be made).

We solicit suggestions for other improvements, particularly from physicists and astronomers. Please let us know your specific comments and suggestions either by means of the Feedback file on Pi-NET or by writing to Lawrence Merrill on my staff or to the Editor of PHYSICS TODAY. We thank you in advance. We thank also the many society officers and AIP staff members who have made Pi-NET possible.

H. WILLIAM KOCH

Executive Director

American Institute of Physics