

Editorial note

As a service to members who have access to a computer, the Council of the Institute has decided to expand its publishing activities in two ways.

1. The Institute will publish certain encyclopaedic matter in electronic format which members will be able to use on their computers. For example Part 4 of Volume 39 of the Proceedings, will be a comprehensive Author and Subject Index to Volumes 1-39. It will be available in the usual printed form and also on 3.5" and 5.25" magnetic discs, capable of being read on Macintosh and IBM (DOS) platforms. Several other databases are in the process of preparation (see e.g. Volume 39: 79). The Council envisages a preferential rate for purchase of these databases by members.

2. In each issue of the Proceedings, starting with Volume 40, the Institute will publish a column entitled "Turing Topics" (to honour the great applied mathematician). This column will, to some extent, be open to our readers, who are invited to contribute, in a few sentences, their experiences (good & bad) of using the wealth of software products now available. We hope that this will serve as a guide to all scientists. In addition the column will contain the names, vendor addresses and prices of various utilities that are brought to our attention. The appearance of such information does **NOT** imply that the Institute endorses the product; it will be selected carefully from the point of view of its utility to our members. Finally the column will contain a list of the products mentioned in the first part of this note. This list will give the title of the database, a brief summary of the information contained therein and its price.

Among many reasons for these expansions of the Institute's publishing activities is the realization that many scientists, during their careers, have accumulated valuable databases pertaining to their scientific interests. This information is of great value to others, but whilst much of it can be recovered from the literature such recovery is a time consuming and tedious job. By publishing such specialized databases in electronic format (and passing on appropriate royalties to those who have created them), we hope that the Institute will serve a useful purpose.