NASIC will ease library research

(Continued from page 1)

determine how other universities can establish similar information services and put them on a self-sustaining basis. With the exception of the biomedical data base, which is part of a National Library of Medicine program, the new services are part of the Northeast Academic Science Information Center network (NASIC). Supported by the National Science Foundation, NASIC is designed to provide more complete information transfers within the scientific community. The NASIC network will ultimately have information centers at university libraries throughout the northeastern MIT is the first university to have access to NASIC. The MIT Libraries, Information Processing Center, and Electronic Computers Laboratory are assisting the New England Board of Higher Education in the development of NASIC. According to Professor J. F. Reintjes, director of the Electronic Science Laboratory, "NASIC is much faster and covers a much broader range of its been than conventional published bibliographic indexes." Among the more than 70 bibliographic services, NASIC is unusual in that it has online interactive access capabilities for retrospective searches. In an online system, NASIC allows the user to modify his search strategies as he proceeds.

Before leaving the terminal, the NASIC user can take out a list of references in hand. Reintjes noted that the offline (batch) search systems available elsewhere may take as long as three weeks to produce such a list. However, offline access costs less and is available for some NASIC data bases. A person wanting to use NASIC would first make an appointment with a NASIC information specialist at one of the five MIT on-line libraries (Dewey, Barker, Engineering, Science, Humanities, and Rotch). The information specialist will help the user determine the problem in the language of the information retrieval system and will suggest search strategies that will minimize terminal time. The user can normally get the desired information within 15 to 30 minutes. Reintjes emphasized that because of the idiosyncrasies of the data bases, the consultations with the information specialists are very important. For example, a person searching MEDLINE, the biomedical database, would not find anything under the heading "cancer," Reintjes remarked to "bipolar." Although there is a charge for NASIC terminal time and the existence of the information specialists, Reintjes thinks that the cost may be low enough to make NASIC useful for undergraduates doing term papers or graduate students making literature surveys or doing research. During the current academic year, the first several hours of processing assistance from the information specialists is free. Thus, Reintjes continued, a person would MEDLINE, which is heavily sub- 

In addition to being available at the five MIT on-line libraries, NASIC terminals can be installed elsewhere. Demonstrations using portable terminals will be offered during IAP.

As the number of on-line bibliographic data base grows, NASIC will expand its scope. Engineering, physics, and government-sponsored reports will soon be covered. Although many computerized bibliographies exist, few of them have online access capabilities. As present, NASIC is dependent upon other organizations for the development and maintenance of some data bases. For instance, the US Office of Educa- 

tion provides ERIC, the education information database, which is now available through NASIC.

Eventually, NASIC itself may develop new data bases. Reintjes said. Also, NASIC provides numerical data bases, such as US Census information, he added.

Announcements

The Process of Social Change, a political science forum, will be presented on Thursday, November 12, in E52-143, at 7pm. Class discussion of Richard Nixon's search strategy as he proceeds. As the number of on-line bibliographic data base grows, NASIC will expand its scope. Engineering, physics, and government-sponsored reports will soon be covered. Although many computerized bibliographies exist, few of them have online access capabilities. As present, NASIC is dependent upon other organizations for the development and maintenance of some data bases. For instance, the US Office of Educa-

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Federal Student Aid night will be Nov. 12, in Killian Court, at 7pm. This program is open to prospective MIT students and their parents. It will cover the Federal student aid programs for the 1974-1975 academic year.

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Due to the increasing size of the MIT Libraries, additional space will be opened in the basement of the Libraries to accommodate the increased number of students using the Libraries. The new area will be open to the community.

The Process of Social Change, an economic forum, will be presented on Thursday, November 12, in E52-143, at 7pm. Class discussion of Richard Nixon's search strategy as he proceeds.