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"Gateway/front end software"

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Search Aid Software may also be referred to as frontend software or gateway software. Search aid software can be thought of as glorified telecommunications software designed specifically for online searching. You have to modify your search habits slightly to accommodate search aid software but the effort is worthwhile for the benefits received. Search aid software usually does not simplify the use of a database service's search commands like true frontend software does. Individual products offer many or all of the following search aid features:

easy autodial and autologon

upload (send) search strategies developed offline either in their entirety or statement-by-statement; saves on keyboarding time while online

recall the last search statement uploaded in order to edit it; correct your typos without rekeying the entire statement

download (capture search results locally) automatically while online; after the search is completed, then decide what to print or save as a disc file; don't have to print or save-to-disc while online

scroll up or down through entire search session while online; review what was done earlier in the session

store search strategies and search results on disc

help features

type-ahead of the processing of search statements by the database service; saves on keyboarding time

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accounting features

database selection assistance (only for Pro-Search)

post-search processing of search results either with limited line-by-line editing or with more extensive features like SearchWorks

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search any database service either in an online mode or using offline-formulated uploaded search strategies; uploads only to services with a consistent system prompt and cannot be expected to respond to unexpected special prompts like NLM time overflow messages or explodes type ahead of the processing of search statements if the service has a consistent system prompt; works for NLM, BRS and others; can edit any search statements before they are processed

can recall last search statement for hind sight editing (the last keyboarded line, not the last uploaded line)

automatic downloading of entire search session into RAM buffer for online or offline review/printing/file creation

one-keystroke access to help screens

limited post-search processing -- can line edit results

cost accounting features: Dialoglink Account Manager available for \$45 and works for Dialog only, produces printout coversheet, session invoices and monthly reports by database service, database, searcher, client, or charge code; cannot add in an overhead fee

product is slanted towards Dialog; designed for accessing Dialog through several telecommunications networks but

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have to set up separate menu choices for accessing other services through Telenet and Tymnet

for IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatibles, Compaq, AT&T 6300; 256K RAM minimum (more is desirable if you have RAM-resident software); DOS Version 2.0 or later; supports 300/1200/2400 baud modems

Dialoglink Communications Manager costs \$125; \$149 for both the Communications and Account Managers; copy-protection removed with release 1.10

online demo disk available for \$15 (applicable towards purchase); works for 2 connect hours of searching plus indefinite offline time

Review: Aggi Raeder "Dialoglink: Product Evaluation of a New Communication Software from Dialog", DATABASE END-USER 2(4): 17-21, April 1986

Review: Joanne Witiak, "Dialoglink: a review of Dialog's search assistance software", ONLINE, v10, n6, pp.39-42, November 1986.

#### PRO-SEARCH

Personal Bibliographic Software, Inc.  
P.O.Box 4250  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106  
313-996-1580

menu-driven searching of DIALOG 2 and BRS with the "high-level interface" either in an online mode or using offline-formulated uploaded search strategies; the high-level interface functions as a command-simplifying frontend

command-driven searching of any database service with the "native mode" in an online mode or using offline-formulated uploaded search strategies; the native mode functions as search aid software

uploads only to services with a consistent system prompt and cannot be expected to respond to unexpected special prompts like NLM time overflow messages or explodes type ahead of the processing of search statements if the service has a consistent system prompt; works for DIALOG, BRS, CAS Online, NLM, Newsnet and others; can edit any search statements before they are processed high-level interface supports hindsight editing of

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search strategy; subsequent search statements affected by the change are automatically rerun  
automatic downloading of search session into RAM buffer for online or offline review/printing/file creation

database selection assistance for DIALOG and BRS databases;  
brief descriptions of scope, size, time span and cost  
quick access to database record field information for Dialog and BRS databases; high-level interface assists with composing search strategies using database record fields  
native mode translation option (called "cross emulation") supports searching in the command language of DIALOG on BRS, or in the command language of BRS on DIALOG (most but not all commands supported)  
one-keystroke access to help screens  
limited post-search processing -- high-level interface supports whole-record editing and native mode supports line editing of search results  
cost accounting features for Dialog and BRS only; produces printout coversheets, session invoices and monthly reports by database service, database, searcher, client or charge code; cannot add in an overhead fee  
supports IBM Voice Communications Option-- text downloaded into the RAM buffer can be synthesized into speech  
supports mailing label printing from downloaded DIALOG records from any database with name and address fields

product is slanted towards Dialog and BRS; designed for accessing Dialog and BRS through several telecommunications networks but have to set up separate menu choices for accessing other services through Telenet and Tymnet

for IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatibles, TI Professional; plans for an Apple Mackintosh version: DOS Version 2.0 or later requires 256K RAM minimum; DOS Version 3.0 or later requires 320K RAM minimum; Voice Communications Option requires 400K RAM; more RAM than the preceding figures is desirable if you have RAM-resident software; hard disc very desirable for ease of use; supports 300/1200/2400 baud modems

cost is \$495; not copy-protected; reduced price of \$295 for Pro-Search with purchase of any other PBS product; PBS' Searcher's Tool Kit includes Pro-Search, Pro-Cite (file management software), and Biblio-Links for Dialog and BRS (Biblio-Link software converts downloaded Dialog and BRS information into the Pro-Cite database) for a package price of \$995; Biblio-Link software is available

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for \$195 each for OCLC and RLIN and is under development for NLM

working online demo disc available with manual for \$19.95; works for three connect hours of searching plus indefinite offline time; limited to a small subset of BRS and DIALOG databases

Review: Barbara Quint, "Menlo Corporation's Pro-Search: Review of a Software Search Aid", ONLINE 10(1):17-25, January 1986

Review: Margaret Bell Hentz, "Pro-Search: online search aid", INFORMATION TODAY, p.15,33, October 1986.

## SEARCHWORKS

Online Research Systems, Inc.  
627 W. 113th St., Suite 4F  
New York, NY 10025  
212-408-3311

searching Dialog, BRS, NLM, SDC or any database service either in an online mode or using offline-formulated uploaded search strategies; uploads to any service but no autologon to services other than the four listed type ahead of Dialog, BRS, NLM, and SDC processing of search statements; cannot configure type ahead for any other service

automatic "yes" responses to NLM's and SDC's "Continue printing?" queries using a function key toggle  
can edit any uploaded search statements before they are processed by the database service

automatic downloading of entire search session into a disc file for online or offline review/printing/file creation

help screens for offline/online use with examples of search commands and syntax for the four supported services and a permuted index to the help screens; examples are usually for the Medline database; can save and redisplay a specific line of help info after returning online  
post-search processing features: reformatting of search results from several databases or database services to produce consistency in results; changing of database record field labels to specified labels; ranking of

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search results from most relevant to least relevant using user-defined ranking terms; sorting of results from one or more databases into an alphabetical sequence based on a user-defined database record field (one may rank or sort but not both); keyword indexing of results from one or more databases; record editing of search results using word or character-string searching of search results and whole-record deleting; limit of 4000 records for post-search processing

cost accounting features: produces printout cover sheets, session invoices including an option to add an overhead fee, fund accounting for up to 19 separate funds for tracking search expenditures and bills paid; user-defined specific time-period accounting reports

for IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatibles with 256K RAM minimum; more RAM is desirable - 384K or more RAM will allow for the maximum allowable number (4000) of records to be ranked or sorted; DOS Version 2.0 or later; hard disc is mandatory for ease of use, for capturing downloaded file sizes greater than 300K (about 200-300 bibliographic citations with abstracts), and for storage of user files with a combined size greater than 40K (search strategies, accounting files, and post-search processing format templates.)

cost is \$149; owners of Pro-Search may purchase SearchWorks for \$99 (supply copy of paid invoice when ordering); not copy-protected

no demo disc

Dialoglink and Pro-Search are supported by larger, more established companies that have a history of updating their software; SearchWorks' future in the marketplace (including updates) is open to debate

Review: Bill Coons, "SearchWorks: does it really work?", DATABASE, v9, n6, pp.62-68, December 1986.

Review: Ralph Alberico, "SearchWorks a strong contender", SMALL COMPUTERS IN LIBRARIES, pp.8-14, October 1986.

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