

The Middle East Marketing Research Bureau Library and Information Services

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Before proceeding I would like to thank Mr. Petrides and the Cyprus Association of Professional Librarians for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

As most of you are aware, I work for Dr. George Vassiliou at the Middle East Marketing Research Bureau. However, before I discuss the information services operation at MEMRB, I would like to give you some details about the company so that you can better understand the environment in which I work.

MEMRB was founded by Dr. Vassiliou in 1962 and is one of the pioneers in market research in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. The company currently has 12 branch offices and 10 associate offices covering the Middle East and Africa with a full-time staff of over 200 of which over 40 are research executives.

Services rendered by the company include industrial and consumer market research, economic and social studies, computer and software consulting, advertising and media research as well as retail audits and trade research.

Moving on to my own area of responsibility, I would like to emphasize that the information services division has two main functions. On the one hand we have a responsibility to support current research activities by providing relevant and current information. On the other hand we sell information to overseas clients drawing on our own resources and those of various international organisations.

MEMRB's move to new offices in 1984 coincided with my arrival on the scene and I had the opportunity to completely re-organize and rationalize the collection. The library now receives some 130 journals, has around 3,000 books and an extensive newspaper clippings section. In addition, we have a great deal of information on microfiche.

The journals we receive are divided into three areas: those on the Middle East, those on Africa and those on general topics. For the Middle East and Africa we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible in the areas of economic and social development. In the general topic category we find journals on business and marketing, third world development, advertising and economics. Our journal collection is extremely

important to us since our researchers usually require up-to-date information.

The bulk of our book collection is made up of statistics concerning countries in which we conduct research. Our statistical sources cover foreign trade, population and social conditions to mention only a few subjects.

Perhaps the most exciting development over the last six months at the MEMRB library has been the increasing use made of our on-line data base searching capability. In the library I have an ICL microcomputer with a modem and I am able to tap into various computerized information services in the United Kingdom and the United States. For example, the Dialog system based in Palo Alto California has upwards of 140 specialized data bases covering textual, numeric and bibliographic information on most subjects.

Another important development is that we are on the verge of inaugurating an on-line catalogue using our microcomputer. The system has taken a great deal of time to develop but when fully operational in-house information retrieval will be simplified with a considerable saving in time.

Turning to the external information services component of our operation, we work in conjunction with the National Technical Information Service and the World Bank, both based in the United States, as well as the International Centre for Public Enterprises based in Yugoslavia. All three organisations publish many reports and studies which we market and distribute in various countries in the region.

Finally, a very important aspect of our work in this area involves the preparation of custom information packages for various clients.

Such packages are put together using our in-house journal and statistical resources supplemented with the results of database searches whenever necessary.

In closing I would like to say that I must ensure that the library makes a positive contribution to the activities of the company. Of course, it is difficult to put a monetary value on our internal services but it is safe to say that by having well-organised, relevant information, the MEMRB Library makes a significant contribution to the continuing profitability of the company.

