

# TRENDS IN THE CD-ROM INDUSTRY AND HOW THEY WILL CHANGE THE WORK OF THE INFORMATION PROFESSIONAL

By Ann Lawes

**Abstract:** TFPL produces the CD-ROM Directory and has done so since 1986. It is now available in CD-ROM format as well as hard copy. CD-ROM and multimedia titles have more than doubled within the last year and a half. The paper examines this aspect, and looks at subjects, language and price. It then examines the effects on libraries and staff. Department's image has been enhanced, people are interested, attracted, and find CD-ROM user-friendly and quick. They do however need training. Service is improved, but information is not as up-to-date as online. Effects on staff are looked at - how they become involved in CD-ROM, how training programmes are needed, for self and users. We look to the future.

TFPL has been monitoring the CD-ROM industry since 1986 when it produced its first CD-ROM Directory.

A measure of the growth of this industry is that the first directory came in A5 format; numbered 125 pages, 48 titles. The latest edition is A4, 1070 pages, 4731 titles.

It is also available in CD-ROM format - naturally.

Each year we produce a compilation of facts and figures. This is the 1993 version and is available for £25.

## Figure 1: CD-ROM and multimedia CD titles

Within a year and a half - 1992 to mid 1993 - the number of titles has more than doubled. The market took off in 1992.

In less than 10 years (7 years) we have gone from almost nothing to 6000 titles.

Growth shows no sign of slowing down. In fact, it is accelerating. The curve is getting steeper and steeper.

## **Figure 2: New CD-ROM & Multimedia CD titles in 1993 Edition**

Of the 3597 disks in the 1993 edition, 42.3% are new. 61% are aimed at our market - the PC market.

## **Table 1: CD-ROM and multimedia CD titles by subject 1992-1993**

General interest titles form a significant percentage. The remainder are aimed at specific, vertical markets. For example, medical, business.

## **Table 2: CD-ROM & multimedia CD titles by language of disc 1992-1993**

English includes American therefore -  
63% of all titles are American which results in a bias to American material.

## **Figure 3: CD-ROM & multimedia CD titles by type 1993**

Bibliographic and full text most important.

Although there are more than ever they make up a smaller percentage of the total (1993 cf 1992) because of the growth in multimedia, images etc.

## **Figure 4: Price range of CD-ROM & multimedia CD titles 1991-1993**

Most come between \$100 and \$500 but the biggest growth is those priced at under \$100 because these are aimed at the consumer market.

So we have an information resource which has grown phenomenally. And we know that libraries are buying them in great quantities.

What effects are they having on libraries and staff?

Are our methods of information provision changing? Improving?

What do users think about it all?

Each library and information service will have its own aims and objectives to meet the needs of its particular clientele.

However it is possible to make some general observations.

### **Status of library**

CD-ROMs are popular with both library staff and users. They've been "a catalyst in the end user revolution and, whatever the future of the technology, they have

ensured that library and information services will never be the same again".  
(Richard Biddiscombe, University of Birmingham).

Many libraries maintain that CD-ROMs have enhanced the status of the department.

Excellent public relations.

Attracts new people as well as regular users of the library.

### **Users**

Users love CD-ROM - it is user friendly.

- speed of retrieval
- variety of search capabilities
- browsing
- print results.

They gain confidence because there is no penalty for inefficient use.

### but

Users refuse to read help screens, are impatient and demanding, won't look at any other information.

Difficult to get younger users to use any printed reference tools.

Need extensive training, for example programmes of individual tuition.  
Considerable library staff time is involved.

### **Service provision**

Makes information more easily accessible to students and employees.

Enrich collections by acquiring quantities of text at increasingly competitive prices.

Faster and more sophisticated searches produce better service.

Can give everyone networked PC access so different kinds of useful information on their desktops.

### but

not as up to date as online.

Reduced use of printed versions leading to cancelled subscriptions.

## **Finances**

The price is known and is independent of search time.

Use of online services reduced.

Where heavily used database is on CD-ROM, use for retrospective searches and do online search for most recent material.

### but

initial and ongoing costs can be heavy - hardware, software, discs and physical installation.

### How to pay?

Grants for start up costs.

Pay by putting own information on CD-ROM and selling.

## **Effects on staff**

CD-ROM has brought about enhanced skills, freed up staff time for value added work, and increased job satisfaction.

How?

Virtually all members of staff in a library become involved in a CD-ROM service to some extent. This means that:

- librarians have to know how to use a lot of different interfaces. Users generally have specialisms and only need to become familiar with one
- reference librarians and non professional staff not previously involved with online become computer literate
- continuous and comprehensive training programmes are essential to keep staff up to date with developments and new products
- helping users with CD-ROM takes longer than print and the librarian becomes more involved in user's research

In other words, the librarian becomes adviser, consultant, trainer.

It is fair to say that CD-ROM has taken libraries by storm. It took 15-20 years before online information pervaded but CD-ROM has only taken 4 years to do much the same thing.

**So what of the future?**

We don't see growth slowing down in the immediate future.

Competition will bring the cost of products down particularly in general interest areas.

As multimedia rises in importance a lot more products will include:

graphics  
sound.

Librarians will need to adjust from the viewpoint that information and text are synonymous. They will need to learn to use these new facilities and develop new techniques to train others to make good use of them.

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Figure 1:

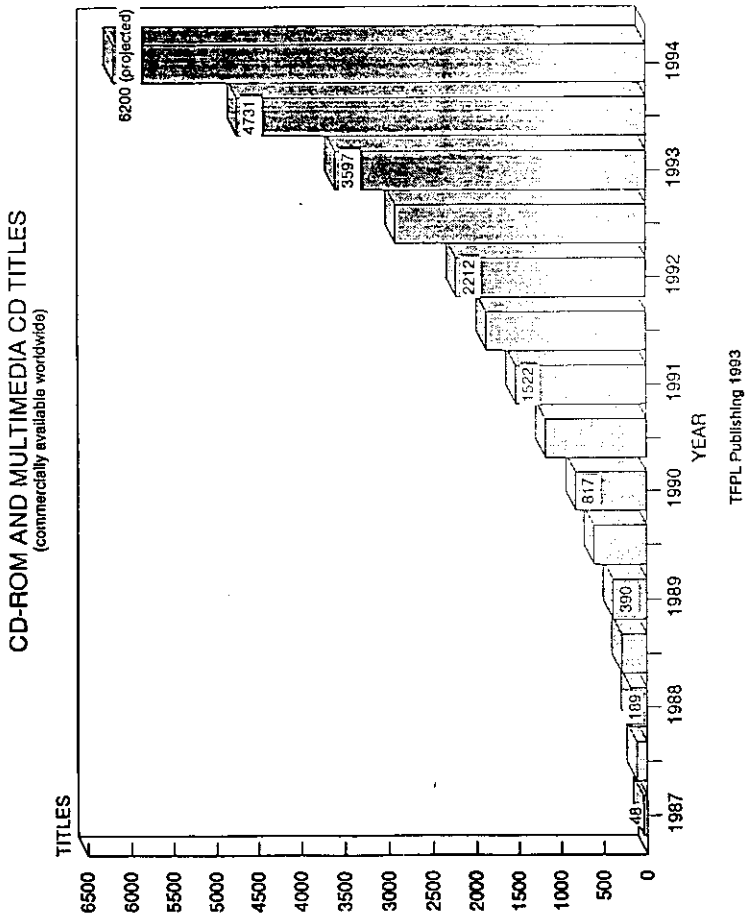
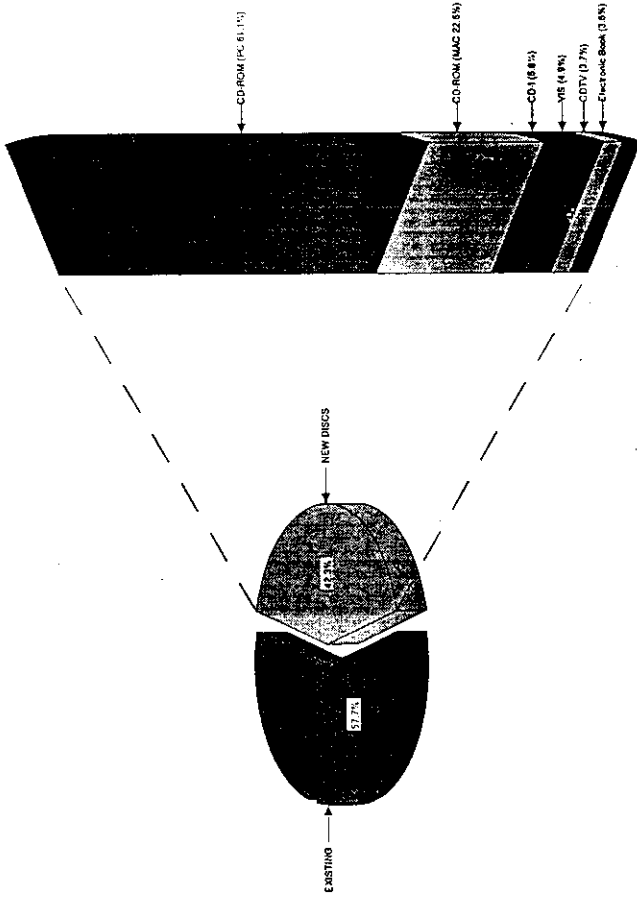


Figure 2:

NEW CD-ROM & MULTIMEDIA CD TITLES IN 1993 EDITION  
(based on a total of 3597 discs)



TFPL Publishing 1993

**Table 1:****CD-ROM AND MULTIMEDIA CD TITLES BY SUBJECT 1992-1993**

Subject Heading	1992		1993		1992-93 Increase (%)
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
General Interest, Leisure & Recreation	345	15.8	800	18.7	74
Arts & Humanities	227	10.3	447	12.4	97
Computers & Computer Programs	215	9.7	345	9.6	60
Medicine, Health & Nursing	197	8.9	252	7.0	28
Science & Technology	185	8.4	280	7.8	51
Business & Company Information	177	8.0	285	7.4	50
Advertising, Design & Marketing	188	7.5	280	7.8	69
Banking, Finance & Economics	165	7.5	249	6.9	51
Education, Training & Careers	165	7.5	424	11.8	160
Crime, Law & Legislation	163	7.4	297	8.3	62
Government Information & Census Data	155	7.0	268	7.4	72
Maps, Map Data & Geography	155	7.0	282	7.3	69
Libraries & Information Science	148	6.7	194	5.4	31
Earth Sciences	145	6.5	188	5.2	30
Chemicals, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals	125	5.7	185	4.8	32
News, Media & Publishing	117	5.3	171	4.8	48
Languages & Linguistics	110	5.0	258	7.2	135
Social & Political Sciences	89	4.0	157	4.7	78
Directories	80	3.8	106	2.9	33
Transport & Transportation Systems	73	3.3	188	4.7	130
Life Sciences	72	3.2	148	4.1	103
Agriculture & Fisheries	62	2.8	96	2.7	55
Military Information & Weapons	47	2.1	71	2.0	51
Architecture, Construction & Housing	39	1.8	88	2.4	121
Intellectual Property	35	1.6	48	1.3	31

Total titles in 1992 = 2212

Total titles in 1993 = 3587

Totals above sum to greater than 100% due to discs covering more than one subject area

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Table 2:

CD-ROM & MULTIMEDIA CD TITLES BY LANGUAGE OF DISC 1992-1993

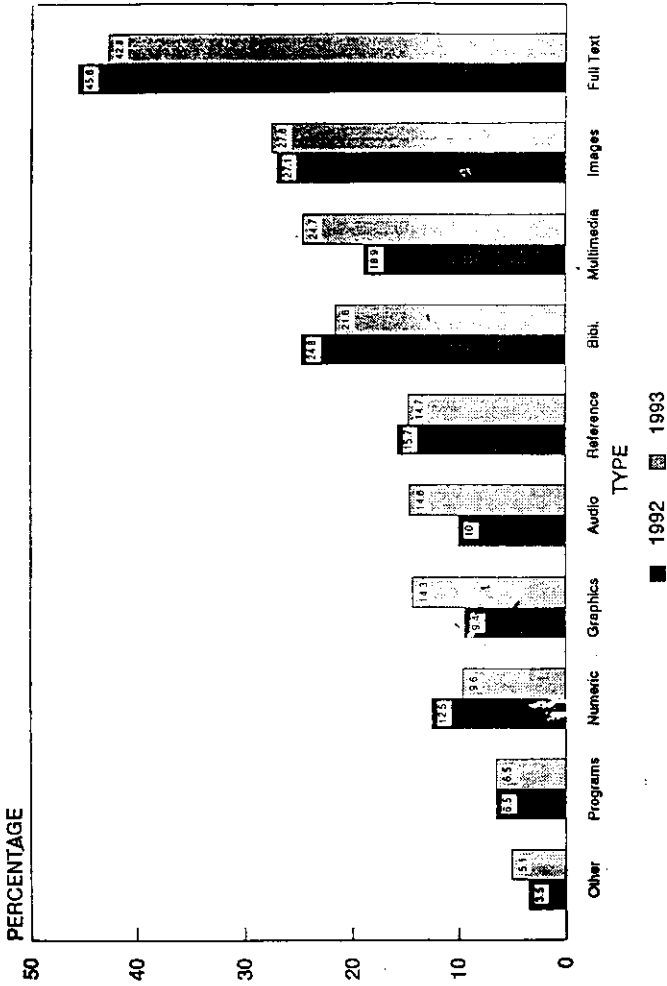
Language	1992		1993	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
English	1489	62.5	2554	71.0
French	210	8.5	290	8.0
German	182	8.2	283	7.3
Japanese	128	5.6	213	5.9
Italian	122	5.5	173	4.8
Spanish	103	4.7	202	5.6
Dutch	83	3.8	115	3.2
Danish	16	.7	28	.8
Swedish	22	1.0	28	.7
Hebrew	6	.2	28	.7
Cantonese/Mandarin	9		21	
Portuguese	5		19	
Norwegian	11		17	
Greek	9		14	
Finnish	11		12	
Latin	5		12	
Afrikaans	4		5	
Hungarian	3		4	
Czech	0		4	
Flemish	4		3	
Russian	2		3	
Coptic	0		2	
Greenlandic	1		1	
Icelandic	1		1	
Welsh	1		1	
Korean	1		1	
Catalan	0		1	
Slovak	0		1	
Not specified	350		479	

Many discs contain information in more than one language.

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Figure 3:

CD-ROM & MULTIMEDIA CD TITLES BY TYPE 1993



Totals sum to more than 100% as many discs contain more than one data type  
 TFPL Publishing 1993

Figure 4:

