US GATEWAY TO SIMBAD ASTRONOMICAL DATABASE

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Annual Report

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During the last year the US SIMBAD Gateway Project continued to provide services like user registration to the US users of the SIMBAD database in France. User registration is required by the SIMBAD project in France. Currently there are almost 3000 US users registered. We also provid user support by answering questions from users and handling requests for lost passwords. We have worked with the CDS SIMBAD project to provide access to the SIMBAD database to US users on an Internet address basis. This will allow most US users to access SIMBAD without having to enter passwords. This new system was installed in August, 1998.

The SIMBAD mirror database at SAO is fully operational. We worked with the CDS to adapt it to our computer system. We implemented automatic updating procedures that update the database and password files daily. This mirror database provides much better access to the US astronomical community.

We also supported a demonstration of the SIMBAD database at the meeting of the American Astronomical Society in January. We shipped computer equipment to the meeting and provided support for the demonstration activities at the SIMBAD booth.

We continued to improve the cross-linking between the SIMBAD project and the Astrophysics Data System. This cross-linking between these systems is very much appreciated by the users of both the SIMBAD database and the ADS Abstract Service. The mirror of the SIMBAD database at SAO makes this connection faster for the US astronomers.

The close cooperation between the CDS in Strasbourg and SAO, facilitated by this project, is an important part of the astronomy-wide digital library initiative called Urania. It has proven to be a model in how different data centers can collaborate and enhance the value of their products by linking with other data centers.

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