

# Editorial

## Databases

The need for databases was a recurring theme raised at the July 13-15 Workshop on Thermal Spray held at SUNY Stony Brook. This theme was later raised at the NTSC in Houston in September. Clearly, the availability of information is important to the efficient and effective application of any technology. Although "databases" is a wholesome topic, a better definition of the scope desired is necessary before any effort can be productively expended.

The range of possible databases can include:

- A searchable bibliography of published papers.
- A compilation of commercial products and services.
- A descriptive compilation of processes and procedures for manufacture of products or characterization and measurement methods for those products.
- A compilation of numeric data, preferably evaluated for accuracy.

The recent development of the ASM/Institute of Materials SearchMore Thermal Spray CD-ROM addresses the first item above, and the annual Thermal Spray Buyers Guide, also from ASM, addresses the second.

Databases that describe processes for manufacture of specific products are clearly in the province of companies marketing products and constitute a valuable asset not likely to be shared. Databases describing methods of characterization and measurement are less subject subject to proprietary concern since some are already codified. However, it should be recognized that many evaluation methods are held within corporate laboratories since they have been developed to simulate operating conditions.

The last item, compilations of evaluated numeric data, can have broad utility if specific data sets that do not include proprietary information are available. An example of the latter might be information on thermal conductivity as a function of feedstock or other processing parameter.

Thus, there seem to be several opportunities for fruitful database development through the cooperative efforts of the thermal spray community. Chris Berndt and I welcome your comments. Please forward them to the editor.

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