

**Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 28, 2001**  
**THE ABSEL ENDNOTE DATABASE: THE PERFECT TOOL**  
**FOR THE BERNIE KEYS LIBRARY**

Richard G. Platt, The University of West Florida

E. Brian Peach, The University of West Florida

**ABSTRACT**

*At the 2000 ABSEL conference, ABSEL issued a CD-ROM-based publication called the Bernie Keys Library containing the complete text of all articles as published in ABSEL proceedings. This paper introduces the ABSEL EndNote Database and the corresponding EndNote software package. The ABSEL EndNote database contains a citation in EndNote format for every article published by ABSEL. Major benefits of the ABSEL EndNote database include (1) it will provide researchers a keyword search capability to the title, authors, and abstracts from ABSEL proceedings, (2) it will reduce the onerous burden of formatting citations as well as automating the reference citation process regardless of the prescribed journal publication style, (3) it will increase the marketing attractiveness of the of the Keys library to Libraries and non-ABSEL researchers, and (4) it will generally improve the quality of paper submissions when used with the EndNote program through wider exposure to past research and increased accuracy of citations.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2000, ABSEL honored one of its founding fathers when it created the Bernie Keys Library (BKL). Dr. Keys was one of the guiding leaders of ABSEL though the first 25 years of its history. The BKL 2000 edition contains the complete text of all articles as published in the first 27 editions of ABSEL proceedings. The text along with an index is conveniently provided on a single CD-ROM. Annual updates will be provided to keep the BKL current and complete.

**ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF  
THE BERNIE KEYS LIBRARY**

The intention in developing the BKL resource was to allow any researcher access to the combined works of all ABSEL proceedings conveniently consolidated on one compact disc. The target audience included both ABSEL and non-ABSEL members as well as libraries. It was hoped that exposure to the BKL would broaden interest in attending ABSEL's annual conference and in submitting papers for the Proceedings. Although such a resource provides many benefits to experienced and neophyte researchers alike, there are some limitations.

Attendees at ABSEL conferences automatically receive a current version that includes all Proceedings

articles through the current conference. Unfortunately, marketing the BKL to an audience beyond conference attendees is a challenge. There is a large number of researchers who would likely be interested in owning, or having access to the BKL if they knew of its existence. Although the modest cost should make it attractive to those interested in simulation and experiential research, this same modest cost places limits on what can be spent to market the BKL. Some means of capturing potential users attention without incurring significant costs is a highly desirable goal.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ABSEL ENDNOTE  
PROJECT**

**Literature Search** There are a number of problems facing any researcher whether it is developing a new stream of research, or exploring a new direction of an existing research agenda. One of the most significant problems begins with identification of the pertinent prior research including the task of locating the relevant research in an expeditious and user friendly manner. One of the most common complaints of ABSEL reviewers is the failure to cite relevant prior research reported by ABSEL. In some cases submitted papers duplicate prior work. A leading cause is assumed to be the lack of access to ABSEL's proceedings by non-members and new members. Although the BKL will partially alleviate this problem for new members, it will have a lesser effect on non-members who do not know about the BKL. In addition, although the BKL is searchable to a limited extent, sophisticated searches are not easy. The ABSEL EndNote Database (AED) will provide more powerful and user friendly searches of the BKL.

**Reference Lists** A second problem deals with the obstacles and complications involved in the process of writing up the research results. This problem is more mechanical in nature, but is an obstacle confronting every researcher striving to compose a List of References. Every research report, whether it be a journal article or conference proceedings paper, requires the author to develop and format the list of references. The time necessary to develop this reference list is often duplicated several times over as the author works through the multiple articles in the research stream. Ensuring the accuracy of citations as data are moved from source to paper or from previous papers to the current paper is a demanding process. Collating the

## Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 28, 2001

reference citations into the correct format often yields the literary equivalent of Type I or Type II error. The author either omits a reference that should be included or includes a reference from a previous article that is not appropriate to the article at hand.

Compounding this problem is the requirement that the different reference format styles require that the reference citations be formatted differently (e.g., MLA, APA, Turabian, etc.). For example, does this reference specification require the author's name or just the author's initials? Is the reference list in alphabetical order or in order of citation occurrence in the article? Everyone, from college students through highly published researchers, has dealt with this issue and the accompanying frustration and fatigue. The fact that different publication outlets require different reference style specifications can make preparation of reference lists time consuming and introduces additional opportunities for errors to occur. By automatically transferring and reformatting citations, the AED reduces both time required and the number of errors.

**Wider Exposure of Bernie Keys Library** As mentioned previously, lack of exposure of the BKL to non-ABSEL members is a major limitation to its usefulness. Currently, the Bernie Keys library is only available on CD-ROM and must be obtained either through membership in ABSEL or purchased directly from ABSEL. For potential users, this means that researchers must first invest in the BKL CD-ROM before knowing if the material is relevant or useful. Only after they acquire the BKL CD, can they search the contents to find if there are any references related to their work in process.

By having the complete list of ABSEL citations in End Note format, the AED can be widely disseminated through such devices as posting it on ABSEL's website. Thus, an advantage of the AED is visibility. From the ABSEL web site anyone can download the AED and use it with the EndNote software to review the title, authors, and abstracts of the entirety of the ABSEL body of research. By identifying potentially useful papers in the AED, researchers will be more inclined to purchase, or encourage their library to purchase, the BKL.

### THE ENDNOTE SOFTWARE

For years, researchers have needed a solution to the problem of reference list creation. Early HyperCard databases allowed a researcher to build an electronic annotated bibliography on a subject and then search that bibliography. That represented a major step forward in empowering authors. However, it did little to alleviate the frustrations and time invested in formatting reference lists only to have editors bounce the list back with copious corrections to satisfy the latest version of the required bibliographic formatting standard. EndNote is a powerful reference management software package that addresses both the issues related to identifying references and to managing the use of the references within a research paper.

First, as mentioned earlier, EndNote permits the creation of reference databases. To the researcher, these are analogous to an annotated bibliography, only the bibliography is electronic, searchable, and highly usable and user friendly. Each document in an EndNote database contains data fields, but how the data gets into the individual data fields for each reference in the database is up to the researcher. In the case of the AED, the collective efforts of the past 27 ABSEL conferences was painstakingly transferred from the BKL to the AED, individual paper by individual paper. Not a technological innovation, but the end justified the means. The AED can be easily maintained and kept current using filters a described next.

A powerful feature of EndNote is that it supports the use of import filters. For example, suppose Sally Newprof decides to develop a research stream exploring the use of experiential simulation exercises in marketing. A first stop should be the AED where she can search for "simulation" and "marketing". The resulting articles would form the nucleus for her research. However, Sally is sure that there is additional research published on the use of simulations in marketing, because when she printed the ABSEL articles from the BKL she found numerous citations of other works by ABSEL researchers and others. So, Sally goes to her university library and searches for other references. When she finds them, EndNote has the capability for her to use the filter suitable for her library's database to import the references straight into her growing electronic annotated bibliography. All of which started with her search of the AED.

When Sally starts to write her paper, EndNote will manage her reference citations and reference list. When she submits her paper to ABSEL for the 2002 conference in Pensacola, EndNote puts the reference citations and reference list into the APA format specified by ABSEL. However, after the conference when she revises her paper for submission to a journal that requires MLA format, she does not need to agonize over the journal's requirement for MLA document format specifications. EndNote will convert the references in the document text and the reference list into the appropriate bibliographic style. Currently, EndNote supports over 300 bibliographic styles.

The full capabilities of EndNote are beyond the intents of this paper, but a few applications relevant to ABSEL will be discussed next.

### THE ABSEL ENDNOTE DATABASE

Each year for the last 27 years, ABSEL has held an international conference and has published as its proceedings the papers presented. This represents a significant and growing body of research written by its members and conference attendees. Although the conferences were generally organized into two tracks, simulation and experiential issues, there are readily identifiable groupings of topics within each conference

## Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 28, 2001

track. The AED provides researchers the tool necessary to identify references in any ABSEL proceedings, build a reference list, and then manage that reference list as an integral part of article composition.

Included in the AED is a full citation and the abstract for every article published in the ABSEL proceedings. The secret to the flexibility of the AED lies in the format of the database and the capabilities of the EndNote software. The data for each proceedings article in the AED is stored as a collection of individual data fields. For each descriptive characteristic of an article (e.g. author, or title), that value for an article (e.g. "H. Bernard Keys") is stored as an individual value. When there are multiple data items for the same field (e.g. second author is "Joseph Wolfe"), then there are multiple data items stored in the database. When a researcher wants to find references on a particular topic (e.g. total enterprise simulations), then the EndNote software will search the AED and find all references with that term in any of the data fields.

The contents of the AED differs significantly from the BKL. The BKL contains the complete text of every ABSEL paper as well as figures, reference lists, and all other materials published in the ABSEL proceedings. The AED only contains the data fields necessary to assist in managing the references and their abstracts.

As an example, if a researcher knows that Diana Page has worked with the Looking Glass simulation, but wants to know if she has written other papers for ABSEL, a search of the AED can identify all papers for which Diana Page was one of the authors. If the researcher then wants to read any of the articles by Dr. Page, the researcher would refer to the BKL. The BKL CD has the text of every paper published in the ABSEL proceedings. After reading the article by Dr. Page and determining its place in the literature review for the current research project, the researcher can insert the citation for the article into the List of References without having to worry about what reference format is specified. When the paper is complete, EndNote will format all of the references correctly.

### CONCLUSION

This paper describes a database, the ABSEL EndNote Database (AED), that includes all papers published since the first edition of the ABSEL proceedings. When used with the EndNote software and the researcher's choice of word processing program, the AED solves many of the problems facing researchers when developing a new paper or project.

One reason ABSEL published the BKL was to leverage the work done by the members of ABSEL into the non-ABSEL community. The objective was to make it easy to access the research conducted by ABSEL members by anyone who had an interest in that research. However, by its very size, the BKL does not facilitate dissemination of ABSEL research to persons who do not know ABSEL exists. Likewise, it does nothing to facilitate the production

of research materials which cite ABSEL and related sources.

The AED database was developed to address both of these issues. The AED is small enough to be posted on the ABSEL web site where it can be accessed by anyone with access to the World Wide Web. The searchability of the AED will increase the visibility of the materials published in the BKL. It will increase the quality of citing prior work, and the accuracy of citations themselves. Once the research report is completed, the AED will assist in the development and modification of a standardized reference list in over 300 reference styles.

### REFERENCES

- The Bernie Keys Library (version 1) [CD-ROM]. (2000). The Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning [Producer and Distributor].
- ISI ResearchSoft. (1999). EndNote: The All-in-One Solution. Berkley, CA.: Author.