

NEW CONCEPTS SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP ON DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF EXPLOSIVES

A symposium/workshop to **solicit new and imaginative approaches** for the detection and identification of illegally used explosives is being sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Energy, Justice and Transportation on October 30, 31 and November 1, 1978 in Reston, Virginia. The purpose of this symposium is to disseminate to a broad range of currently uninvolved members of the scientific and technical community: 1) current needs and problems 2) state of current research and 3) interest of the federal sector in new ideas and approaches. General and poster sessions will be used to describe operational requirements and the state of current technology. Small workshop sessions will be utilized to explore new approaches. Registration will be held on October 29 between 6 PM and 8 PM.

Examples of current research which will be discussed include:

Vapor Detection Methods

Natural vapor characterization
Vapor tagging of explosives
Detection instrumentation
Animals

Non-Vapor Detection Methods

Nonionizing; e.g., NMR, FIR
Ionizing; e.g., X/Yray, CT
Deactivation of Blasting Caps
Non-Vapor Taggants

Identification Methods

Identification Taggants
Debris Analysis

Taggant Incorporation Methods

Microencapsulation
Vapor Absorption
Coatings/Alloying

Limited funds may be available to encourage the participation of a few researchers. Applications for travel support are currently available and must be returned to the Symposium Chairman by 1 August 1978.

Researchers are also encouraged to submit papers and poster session displays. A short outline of proposed papers or displays should be submitted to the Symposium Chairman by July 17, 1978. Anyone interested in attending, presenting papers or displays, or otherwise participating in this symposium should contact: A. Atley Peterson, Symposium Chairman, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20226 (202) 566-7436.

The main reason language has this capacity lies in the reader's ability to assign significance to symbols. This talent must be taken into account to understand the scope of the interface between man and machine. In clinical terms I refer to projection, transference, and cathexis; in experimental terms—cognitive and affective association bonds. These processes operate in political, religious, economic, and scientific domains to produce familiar results. A wooden cross may have profound influence on the feelings and behaviors of a devout Christian; a \$20 bill has purchasing power because we all agree with the Secretary of the Treasury that it has purchasing power; soldiers die to defend their flag because they have been persuaded that foreign soldiers will destroy them to defend foreign flags; mathematicians let X equal all prime numbers from zero to infinity (or anything else) to facilitate investigating the world of logic.

Thus, linked with a reasonable amount of religious fervor, political propaganda, money sense, and mathematical logic, computers may come to dominate the therapeutic scene. My comment is not facetious, no more than was Shakespeare when he anticipated our correspondence with the remark: "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (2).

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References

1. J. Weizenbaum, *Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgement to Calculation* (Freeman, San Francisco, 1976).
2. *Hamlet*, act II, scene ii, line 259.

Equine VD: Isolating the Agent

In the News and Comment section of the 14 April issue of *Science*, it is stated (p. 181) that the causative agent of the current outbreak of equine venereal disease in Kentucky is an organism that "like the human gonococcus, is anaerobic . . ." and therefore did not grow under the aerobic conditions used for initial isolation. Although the gonococcus grows under conditions of reduced oxygen tension, it is by no means considered an anaerobic organism. Any attempt to isolate an unknown causative agent of equine venereal disease should certainly have included anaerobe culturing quite early in the diagnostic scheme.

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All correspondence to Editor.

Paper submissions are invited.

Matter on ESP, UFO, etc., will not be accepted.