

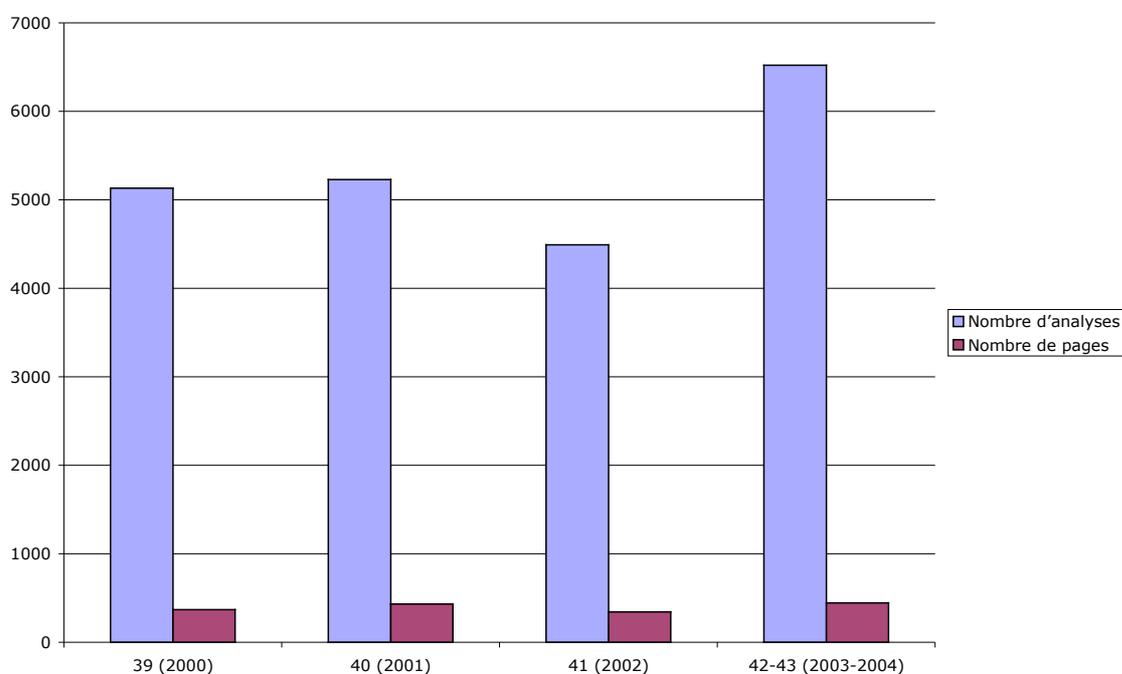
Bibliography Commission of the International Union of Speleology

2002-2005 Report

Since the congress in Brazil, 4 BBS Speleological Abstracts have been published:

issue #	Number of abstracts	Number of pages
39 (2000)	5133	370
40 (2001)	5227	432
41 (2002)	4493	342
42-43 (2003-2004)	6520	446

Changes in numbers of abstracts and numbers of pages. On the left, number of abstracts; on the right, number of pages.



It is clear that the number of pages is fairly stable, around 440 pages. However, the number of abstracts has greatly increased, without having too much effect on the number of pages. In the last ten years, we have strictly limited the size of abstracts, which has allowed us to print over 20 abstracts on one BBS page. Our goal is to publish information about publications, but not to replace them. The result is that our collaborators take more time to write their abstracts; they can no longer just copy the article's abstract.

Each BBS is the result of about 1000 hours of work for the Swiss editing team. Despite the increased use of computer entries, there are still many errors and corrections to make. The list of BBS collaborators is published in each issue.

The CD-ROMs

Every year the BBS is available as a database on CD. The 12-year CD, published in 2002, contains over 50,000 abstracts. Each year it is possible to add the yearly CD to this, creating a unique database which is constantly evolving.

The co-publishers

The BBS's publication is made possible each year by the co-publishing federations:

Fédération Française de Spéléologie
Società Speleologica Italiana
British Cave Research Association
Société Suisse de Spéléologie
Federacio Catalana d'Espeleologia.

These copublishing federations make a vital contribution to the written abstracts, and they ensure the paper version of the BBS by ordering issues for their members. Without their help, it would be impossible to print the BBS.

The problem of printing and posting

Printing the BBS costs about 9,500 Euros for 750 copies of 450 pages. In the last few years, all the co-editing federations have reduced the number of orders. In addition to printing costs must be added the cost of posting, which is 15 Euros within Europe.

Should we abandon paper?

- Not as long as there is enough demand for the printed version and the printing costs are covered. Issue # 42-43 has 750 prints; it is not possible to print less copies.
- Yes, if the printing should decrease further. One possible solution is to offer a new kind of CD, with the usual database as well as the abstracts in pdf format. Users could print the pages they need; and federations could be responsible for printing their own country's pages.

The problem of federations which collaborate on the BBS but are not copublishers

Several federations are regular contributors to the BBS, without however participating in the journal's publication. These federations add to the bill of the other copublishing federations. Of course, they contribute to the wealth of abstracts in the BBS, and it would be stupid to refuse abstracts from people who are not BBS subscribers. But it would be possible to reduce the number of abstracts, for example those with less world impact, or to reduce the size of abstracts. Should we abandon paper for this? One suggestion would be that federations who provide more than 150 abstracts should financially support publication of the BBS, for example by a single subscription fee of 500 Euros.

The quality of abstracts

Despite all the available computer tools, the Swiss editing team still spends far too much time correcting abstracts, as much in the classifications as on spelling. Collaborators must improve the quality of their submissions and know the BBS guidelines, as well as the classification instructions. Even in the short term, it is not feasible for the Swiss editors to spend over 300 hours correcting and formatting abstracts.

Commission meetings during the congress

The following points will be addressed during the commission's meetings:

- Introduction of participants

- Abandon the paper version?
- Financial contribution of non-copublishing federations
- Training for collaborators
- Miscellaneous

Future of the BBS

The BBS needs a better distribution, and increased support from the IUS.

It is imperative to reduce the workload on the Swiss team, by improving the quality of abstracts. SCNAT, the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences, is funding the online publication of the BBS databases. The project will begin this autumn.

Technically, this is easy to do.

Financially, it will be necessary to install a method of payment for consulting the database, for example in the form of a subscription, or to find another way to compensate for the loss of CD sales by another source of revenues.

In the last few years, it has been possible to type abstracts on the Internet; this improves data entry. The use of this kind of abstract will continue to increase.

Obviously, all depends on the availability of the website. We hope as soon as possible to be able to produce a PDF version of the site or the abstracted article, to store on the commission's server. In some cases it will be possible to publish the PDF files with the BBS; in other cases there will be copyright issues and file-size limitations.

The next BBS will be published in spring 2006, and will deal with 2005. The editing deadline has been set to the 1st of February 2006. The easiest method is to abstract journals as they are published.

Acknowledgements

As you read this report, written by the Swiss editing team, please remember our 50 collaborators around the world, who contribute a large part of their efforts to the BBS. We would like to say a huge thank you for all their help.

Publicity

Don't forget to stop by the Commission's stand to buy the latest BBS and complete your collection:

42-43 (2003-2004)
6520 references. 446 pages.

Price: 90 CHF, 60 euros

The 17-year CD (1988-2004)

costs 220 francs (145 euros)

It is free for buyers of the 12-year CD and the 2000-04 updates. You can exchange them at the congress.