

**Toxicological Information- und Data Network -
A European Challenge?
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Security aspects

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1 Introduction

The belgian Poison Centre received the first product data in an electronic way already more or less 12 years ago. Our experience during these years shows that almost no company, even if it could do this, makes its data secure. Almost all companies send their data without any protection. This is not only true for belgian companies, but also for companies of other countries sending information to us. We try to manipulate the received information with all care we can in order :

- not to loose them
- to have the needed access to them
- to be sure that what we receive is also what the company thinks he sent
- to be sure that what we receive is usefull for us

There is no law that obliges companies to use a proposed format. We try to convince the companies that we prefer electronic transfer above paper. We propose different electronic formats and the company choose depending of their possibilities.

These formats :

- are data-oriented : the way the data must be organized
- do format the data completely or partly
- are completely electronic (all data sent in an electronic form) or partly electronic (some data also on paper)

Some formats permit many data not to be formatted strictly in different fields (textformat, Word, pdf, ...)

2 Manipulation of the sendings

2.1 Steps

We organized different steps of control in order to ensure that we have received the data we want to receive :

- First overall controll to discover the biggest problems (diskette-problems, ...)
- Registration of a sending
 - A sending is identified by the name of the company name that sent the data + the date of sending
 - The format of the sending is controlled
- Copy of the data to the disk of the server (in its specific and definitive folder.
- Copy of the data in a data-control program where the data themselves are controlled and a list of the products is printed and sent to the company

- When everything is ok : import of the data in the definitive databank

2.1.1 What if problems :

- Media that cannot be read are never returned to the company. The company is contacted and asked to send the data again. The media with such problems are also registered and not thrown away.
- Media that can be read but for which the company has not strictly followed our indications concerning the format :
 - Or we try to solve the problems by ourself
 - Or we contact the company
- For media that have problems concerning the content (the data) the company is also contacted

3 Conclusions

Our biggest conclusion is that electronic transfer makes by no means more sure that we will receive more accurate data. On the contrary, we have to check more than in the past, that :

- we have received the data we want to receive
- that the data will be accessible when they are needed
- we even more than often decide :
- to scan the paperform of the product information and
- to enter manually in our central database a reference-record concerning that product, in which we include a reference to the scanned image-file.

Thus, the central question is : “Do we receive what we expect to receive”

In general, we had to add in the overall reception-procedure of electronic material many manual procedures, in order to be sure we receive what we want to receive.

Presentation