

Erowid Extracts

A P s y c h o a c t i v e P l a n t s a n d C h e m i c a l s N e w s l e t t e r

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Number 3

Erowid.org is a member-supported organization working to provide free, reliable and accurate information about psychoactive plants and chemicals.

The information on the site is a compilation of the experiences, words, and efforts of hundreds of individuals including users, parents, health professionals, doctors, therapists, chemists, researchers, teachers, and lawyers. Erowid acts as a publisher of new information as well as a library for the collection of documents published elsewhere, spanning the spectrum from solid peer-reviewed research to creative writing and fiction.

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Change is a constant. While we make no promises about publication dates for *Erowid Extracts*, this issue has been delayed several months because the rental property where we previously lived was being sold and we had to move. A seven year chapter of living in the redwoods has drawn to a close...if our new place is half as nice, we'll be happy. Please note that our mailing address has changed. If you sent us physical mail and haven't heard from us, please let us know.

Part of the goal of *Erowid Extracts* is to update members on what's going on at Erowid. This issue includes articles that discuss some of the projects we're working on, describe conferences we've spoken at, and try to communicate some of our thoughts about the direction we're heading.

It is clear that the Erowid Project and others who are working to improve the quality and availability of information about psychoactive plants and chemicals are having an impact. It is somewhat disconcerting to hear—in email and in person—how much people rely on the site and how much trust is given to information we publish. While we do what we can to keep the quality of information high, we are all too aware of the many holes and weaknesses inherent in the patchwork quilt of information that we have collected.

What's not clear is how to speed the development of these types of resources. How can we help catalyze the instantiation of knowledge that is already at hand but hasn't quite crystallized into usable documentation? Much of our work is focused on archiving in one place what humans have already learned about these issues. Beyond the discoveries of formal scientific inquiry, there are also the myriad stories and practical wisdoms gleaned by individuals through trial, error and creative exploration.

With our small crew, it is tricky to balance working on the development of new information and trying to document the old. For many of the more knowledgeable members of the wider community, it is not as interesting to try to document the things that are well known, yet those are exactly the facts that have to be relearned again and again by those new to the field. Part of our work is to encourage those with hard-won bits and pieces of knowledge to record them and make them publicly available. As we continue to develop the new infrastructure for Erowid 3.0, systems for evolving knowledge are very much on our minds.

"I arise in the morning, torn between a desire to save the world and a desire to savor the world. That makes it very hard to plan the day."

— E.B. White

Heading into the last quarter of 2002, we hope that the projects we're completing will ease the work for others doing research in this field and will create more access to source materials for those who face complex choices about how to manage their own consciousness. Our primary redesign effort has been towards the addition of several thousand new entries in the scientific references library. This project will continue to undergo development for the foreseeable future and we anticipate that it will evolve into a useful and popular area of the site.

We hope you enjoy *Erowid Extracts*. Please send comments, criticisms, and suggestions for future issues to extracts@erowid.org.

Fire & Earth

Face to Face with NIDA

A Conference on Drugs, Youth, and the Internet

by Fire Erowid

In early June, Earth and I traveled to Bethesda, Maryland to speak at a small conference held by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) on the topic of “Drugs, Youth, and the Internet”.

As a division of the National Institute of Health (NIH), NIDA’s stated mission is “to conduct research into drug abuse and addiction and to disseminate the results of that research to improve drug abuse and addiction prevention, treatment, and policy.” Despite this noble mission, we often disagree with NIDA’s official stance on one issue or another; and so it was with some surprise that we found ourselves invited to speak.

Unfortunately, our plane flight to the East Coast was overly eventful. Our layover in Chicago turned into three hours in the airplane sitting on the tarmac, and another stressful four hours in the airport before we were notified that all flights heading East were cancelled for the evening. We were able to make it to a hotel in time to get three hours of sleep before returning to the airport. After an uneventful flight to Baltimore, we were picked up and driven to NIDA’s headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, just in time for our scheduled 11 a.m. talk.

The room contained a large conference table, around which sat the 20 primary conference participants. Another 40 chairs around the outside of the room were mostly filled, bringing the total attendance to about 60. We took a moment to introduce ourselves to our hosts and meet the representatives from Bluelight (bluelight.nu), and then took our places at the table.

Sleep-deprived and highly caffeinated, we had a few minutes to evaluate the situation before it was our turn to speak. We introduced ourselves to the room and spent a few minutes describing the Erowid project. First, we talked about the history of the site: how and when it got its start, how it has grown over the past six years, how many people visit the site, and who those people are. We also described the types of information presented on Erowid and what we’re trying to accomplish.

After we finished speaking, we had a chance to listen to a number of other speakers—mostly government-sponsored researchers—talk about research they had conducted either using the internet, or investigating the relationship between the internet and drugs of abuse. Among those speakers were Kit Bonson of the FDA, John Halpern from McLean Hospital/Harvard University, Edward Boyer, author of “Websites with Misinformation about Drugs,” the *New England Journal of Medicine* article that was mentioned in the last issue of *Erowid Extracts*, and Edward Murguia of Texas A&M University.

The afternoon was filled with discussion of potential interactions between NIDA researchers and drug information websites such as Erowid and Bluelight. We were also asked what suggestions we had for research that NIDA should be conducting, as well as what ways NIDA could help Erowid. After spending quite a bit of time preparing for potential questions, these definitely surprised us.

We had two primary suggestions. The first was for NIDA to conduct basic toxicological research into new and emerging recreational drugs *before* they become popular or even illegal. NIDA shouldn’t wait until after people have died to look for potential dangers and mechanisms of pharmacological activity and risk. Second, we recommended that NIDA work to create interaction charts for recreationally used psychoactives and prescription medications, to gather into one place known information about how, for example, Prozac or Paxil interact with tryptamines, how Wellbutrin reacts with cocaine or amphetamines, or how Zolofit interacts with DXM. When new pharmaceuticals arrive on the market, NIDA

should fund basic interaction evaluations with the most common recreational drugs.

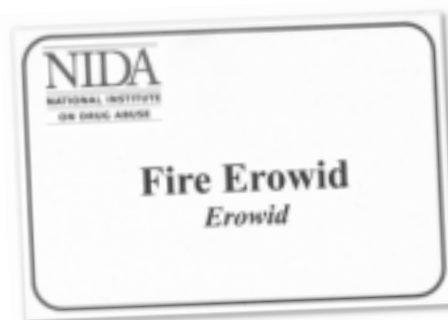
Both of these suggestions were well received and seemed to spark interest among some of the researchers. In fact, since the meeting, we’ve been told that some work may have already begun in these areas as a result of our discussions.

Perhaps the most amusing and striking moment of the conference occurred during the round-table discussion about ways in which Erowid and NIDA could work together. A researcher from NIDA spoke up and stated that s/he wasn’t sure that the two groups should work together because it could possibly ruin Erowid’s reputation among our visitors. In all seriousness, s/he was concerned that if Erowid’s visitors saw that we were working with NIDA in any capacity, our credibility could be ruined.

Obviously this is a real issue, though one we didn’t expect to hear voiced by those at NIDA. Erowid and NIDA don’t exactly see eye to eye on how data, research, and information should be conducted and distributed. What would Erowid visitors and members think of any sort of collaboration between the two groups? Is such a collaboration possible without compromising our beliefs and mission?

Regardless of the answers to these questions, we were very surprised and pleased by how positively we were received by both the researchers and NIDA staff who were present.

While we certainly disagree about many issues, it is clear that at many levels in the government infrastructure there are scientists who are fully aware of the subtleties, mysteries, and complexities of the human relationship to psychoactives. It was a pleasure to have a chance to share ideas and debate viewpoints with thoughtful researchers who normally live on the other side of the invisible fence of politics. ●



AMANITA MUSCARIA & liver damage?

There has been a great deal of confusing, contradictory and incorrect information published about the toxicity of *Amanita muscaria* and *A. pantherina*. This information has appeared in everything from well-respected encyclopedias and mushroom field guides to medical textbooks and poison control center handbooks.

Most of these sources, including mycology references, list both *A. muscaria* and *A. pantherina* as “toxic”, “poisonous”, or even “deadly poisonous”.^{1,2} At the same time, *A. muscaria* has been used for centuries as a shamanic inebriant and continues to have a small but consistent following as an entheogen.

At least some of the confusion comes from varying definitions and uses of the terms “toxic” and “poisonous”. The traditional definition of a “poison” or “toxin” is usually something along the lines of “a substance that causes injury or death”. But the terms “poisonous” and “toxic” are frequently used to describe any substance that causes physical illness, even temporary. There is no doubt that some people react to *A. muscaria* with nausea and physical distress. Even effects which are sought by some—loss of equilibrium, changes in perception, or sedation—would be considered undesirable by others, especially if they occurred unexpectedly.

This, in combination with the desire of most authors to limit liability when providing information about plants that are used recreationally, leads most field guides to use the term “poisonous” unequivocally for all plants which contain a psychoactive chemical. It doesn’t take a genius to see the problems with this approach, as readers begin to associate the term “poisonous” with “recreational potential”.

Because *A. muscaria* and *A. pantherina* belong to the genus *Amanita*, the same genus that contains two deadly, liver-toxic mushrooms (*Amanita phalloides* and

Amanita virosa), many people believe that the fly agaric mushrooms also contain liver toxins. But the amatoxins and phallotoxins that are responsible for the deadly nature of *A. phalloides*, *A. virosa*, and several species of *Galerina* and *Lepiota*, and that cause a few deaths each year, are not present in *A. muscaria* or *A. pantherina*. At least some of the confusion around this issue stems from the name “amatoxin”, which certainly suggests its presence in all *Amanita* species.

The primary active chemicals in both *A. muscaria* and *A. pantherina* are muscimol, ibotenic acid, and traces of muscarine.^{3,4,5} None of these chemicals are toxic to the liver at the doses present in these two mushrooms.⁶ And while it’s not uncommon for a careless mushroom hunter to ingest *A. muscaria* and spend the night in the hospital—as they unexpectedly experience drowsiness, hallucinations and twitching—fatalities are few and far between. Children in particular seem prone to ingesting the beautiful red and white fungi, but as stated in a case report of eight children who had ingested *A. muscaria*, “recovery was rapid and complete in all patients.”⁷

There have been only a few reported deaths related to *A. muscaria*, and these are generally cases of misidentification, where large quantities were ingested as food.^{8,9} Jonathan Ott reports in *Pharmacotheon* that he has only been able to verify two deaths, one related to *A. muscaria* and one to *A. pantherina*, and both were in elderly and infirm individuals. One unconfirmed report describes a man who was reported to have died after the ingestion of more than two dozen *A. muscaria* which he mistakenly



thought were *A. caesarea* (an edible *Amanita* species).¹⁰

While it is probably good advice for the novice mycologist to avoid *Amanita muscaria* and *Amanita pantherina* because of the possibility of misidentification, this recommendation for caution should not be misread as evidence of the presence of liver toxins or a poisonous nature. ●

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the time that always happens

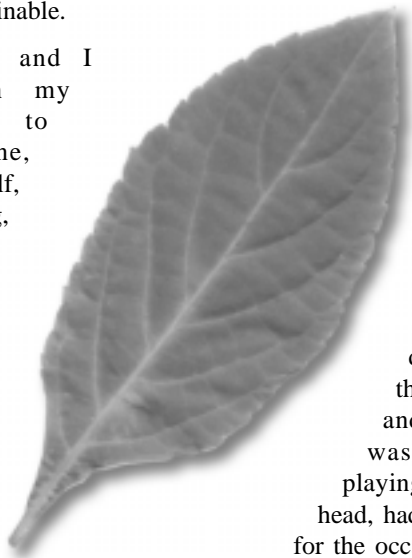
AN EXPERIENCE
WITH *SALVIA DIVINORUM*

BY SYSSYPHUS

I spent almost the entire day painting. This is something I find extremely important in my life. It defines me, it makes me who I am. When I was not painting, I was in meditation. I was playing in my head, feeling my body release and bend, seeing images appear beyond the undersides of my eyes and form as I believed in them more. Although most of my days are like this, today was different and special because I was preparing to dive into an experience that I can only describe as the most holy, meaningful thing I have ever experienced. I wanted this experience to be light, not extreme, but just enough to show me reality and the inner workings of myself.

The time was three o'clock and I was preparing the *Salvia divinorum* for its journey through my body. I prepared the pipe, densely packed to the top, with ground up bits and pieces. I had only once undergone the full experience with Salvia, but I have also experienced the full scale of lower effects as well. I always know that I'm well aware of what I'm about to get into, but I also always know that it is impossible to be aware of a feeling that is completely unexplainable.

Three fifteen and I was sitting on my floor, listening to David Arkenstone, repositioning myself, stretching, breathing, trying to find myself, trying to prepare myself for what was to come. I was waiting to be ready, for my mind to allow me to ignite and inhale this experience. But I felt like I was still waiting for something. I wanted the perfect moment, of complete relaxation and channeling of the positive. I wanted to embark at exactly the right moment.



Three thirty, I found the position in my room, the one I felt was most comforting and peaceful. The music was now as I wanted, the room exactly as good as I could be, my mind as pure as it was going to be, my body comfortable and relaxed. As the flame lit, I almost felt sorry for the plant, playfully, and understood its sacrifice for me. I took as much as I could, held it in, exhaled and finished the rest, hoping I didn't take so much that I would be thrown into infinity, unbelievably intertwined.

It seemed like more than I wanted. It was there, it was coming back for me, I could feel it all around me, getting more and more intense. I reached the ultimate point of the trip before I was to leave my body and enter the ultraverse. This is where it left me. The thoughts inside my head were as profound, if not more profound, than any I had experienced before. This time was extremely similar to the last, incredibly hallucinogenic, being able to feel everything around me as something that was myself and everything else, all at once. The bodily sensation, of what I can only describe as being flipped repetitively in the same direction, always returning to the first millisecond of the flip and stopping after the second, was all about me. The music playing, which was now inside my head, had become me and was perfect for the occasion. Its entire creation was intended for this moment. And it is the only music that ever plays, that day that I experience *Salvia*.

I was connected to the one above me, the giant whole of what this life means. I

could span my entire existence in the time that I was in now. I could sense my future, I could feel my past, I knew my immediate future, I knew my immediate past. I could understand so much about the inner workings of my thoughts and memories.

I felt like I was someone.

I could understand so much about the inner workings of my thoughts and memories. I felt like I was someone.

I felt like I was ready to create and explore this world, and show people what I know. But there was so much more. I felt like I could explain everything about myself, why I paint what I paint, why I draw what I draw and why I do what I do. It all made sense, the whole world was intricately connected to me. It was like it all revolved around me and the energy inside my head, my drive to create.

I felt extreme fear, extreme unknowing of the substance that I had taken, like it was the key to something powerful and overwhelming. I was able to see it, and the fact that I was witnessing it made my life make so much more sense. I understood even more of what I had to do within my life. Feelings of never using the substance again were on top of me. I felt like it was a key to something that was to assist me, and I was to never take it again. I felt my death in it, I felt as if my death was part of the whole experience, followed by rebirth of pure thought. I felt like my life was ending, and there was no time left.

I felt too many things.

Looking back on this state of mind, I believe what I was missing inside myself was love. I felt incredibly isolated, distant from everyone. This brought on feelings of disconnection and need for contact. The thoughts that I knew I was going to have came, and I planned on my contact with other

beings of my planet. I began yelling, unable to hold back the traveling span of unbelievable thought blazing through my brain, emptying out. I could see the thoughts forming inside my head from ultimate points and traveling downwards as they were being created, different thoughts latching on to those, and being organized and stored in the most efficient way. I began to write down everything that I had thought, and that I was feeling. My head was pure; I knew what was right, what life was, how to live it and how to view other living beings. At this point I began to see godly LSD-like patterns beyond, but on top of what was directly in front of me, like I was floating in front of an ever-psychedelic background in another body, as well as being here on earth.

I scribbled out all my emotions and feelings. At first, most of it was just loops and edges, unreadable later on, because I could not empty my ideas out fast enough. I experienced incredible nostalgia for my earlier, more extreme experience. I felt the same connection to the same person, and it reassured the truth of all things.

I felt like my current mind state was madness, but I knew I was going to return, I knew that it was okay, and I knew that I would soon be off at college, pursuing my artistic abilities.

Looking at my works posted on my wall, I felt like what I had accomplished was

impossible, like I could not have done it. And yet somehow, something so far up was who I was, and I was channeling incredible thoughts and imagery from this greater being that I was, in another plane of existence. I suddenly had the urge to create. I needed to do something in ink, to the best of my ability, in simple honor of being able to do anything at all, and in honor of exploiting the power and gift that I have to create.

It began, I felt unsteady, but I ignored this, because it would only be righted as I moved my pen across blank space. It all came out as it always comes out at this moment of my life. I felt like this was the millionth time my life was being played. I knew I could not make an error, I knew that whatever error I did make, it would only be fixed and it would eventually turn into exactly what it would be, and always was. Each time I felt like it could have been completed, I looked at it as if I had seen it complete before, feeling for what was missing, or what could be added to it. I continued, with a few pauses of jotting down thought and mind travel, but eventually finished.

The time was six o'clock. In a flash, this moment in my life had passed. I felt refreshed and more clearheaded than I could possibly be. I felt incredible, alive and breathing.

[Erowid.org/experiences/exp.php?ID=14915](http://erowid.org/experiences/exp.php?ID=14915) ●

Salvia divinorum now controlled in Australia

The Australian National Drugs & Poisons Scheduling Committee recommended in November 2001 to add both *Salvia divinorum* and salvinorin A (the active chemical in *S. divinorum*) to Australia's strictest schedule, Schedule 9. This recommendation was made on the basis that *S. divinorum* has "a high potential for abuse and risk to public health and safety." The recommendations took effect June 1, 2002, making dried or prepared *S. divinorum* illegal to buy, sell, or possess.

While drug laws fall under state jurisdiction in Australia, most states automatically incorporate changes and additions to federal law into the law of the state. This means that for all practical purposes, *S. divinorum* should be assumed to be controlled in all of Australia.

It is unclear whether live *S. divinorum* plants are now illegal as well. According to Shaman Australis (shaman-australis.com), prior to this ruling, there were only three plants that were illegal in Australia: *Erythroxylum* species that contain cocaine, the opium poppy, and *Cannabis*. Other plants that contain scheduled substances are not generally considered illegal as long as the active chemicals are not extracted from them and they are not prepared for use (much as in the United States). This is likely now the case with *S. divinorum* as well.

Australia is the first country we know of that has passed laws against the possession of *Salvia divinorum*. Though we have been told that it is listed in Israel's dangerous drugs register, we have been unable to verify this. ●

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Technical Director	Earth Erowid
Head Archivist	Fire Erowid
Crew	Sophie Psilo Datura
Art Curator	Christopher Barnaby
Reviewers	Scruff Tacovan Morning Glory Seed Desox Catfish Rivers Scotto Shell
Layout & Design	Fire Erowid
Copy Edits	Scotto Figmat
Illustrations	Christopher Barnaby Hiab-X

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Erowid
P.O. Box 1116
Grass Valley, CA 95945
<http://www.erowid.org/>
info@erowid.org

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**Know Your Body
Know Your Mind
Know Your Substance
Know Your Source**

DATA POINTS

As presented at GoTT
(Gathering of The Tribes)
in Los Angeles, May 2002.

IN THE VOID

By Earth and Fire Erowid

We confront the bounds of human knowledge and the limitations of interpretation on a daily basis. It has become apparent in the Erowid Project, as we work to answer people's questions and add to the sum of information available about psychoactives, that many people assume the world holds far more definitive answers than it actually does. In the course of our work we interact with a wide variety of people, and this assumption is not unique to the field of psychedelic research.

In May 2002, we had the opportunity to speak at the Gathering of The Tribes (GoTT) in Los Angeles. GoTT is a non-commercial collaborative project that brings together members of the North American and European underground electronic dance music community for workshops and events that support arts and activism. For the conference we decided to touch briefly on the issue of data interpretation in one of our presentations. Our talk was formulated around a visualization we sometimes use to describe the state of the Erowid archive. Many aspects of it are oversimplified for brevity.

* * * * *

The amount of data that humankind has accumulated is truly staggering. Much that has been documented has been lost, but most of it is simply inaccessible to most individuals. Unique information fills millions of books and thousands of libraries around the world. With the digital revolution, server farms have cropped up: mammoth buildings filled with row after row of floor to ceiling racks of servers, many filled with unique collections of information. But with all this information, we are still left without clear answers to most questions.

Now imagine each piece of this data as a point of light in an infinite, 3-dimensional black space. Each point represents a single documented fact or idea. Relationships between data points are represented by lines or bonds of different strengths—perhaps two pieces of data were acquired during the same experiment, or maybe one piece of

knowledge was only possible after another was proven to be true—some of these connections are thick and ropery, others thin and almost invisible. Together, these points and lines form a vast webwork of information. While there are other layers that can be viewed, such as interpretations of data or commentary, for now we're looking solely at the data layer.

This network of points and lines stretches for as far as we can see in all directions. Yet, despite the vast quantity of information currently in the collective human archives, the data field is mostly dark, empty space between lines and points. There are large areas of the data field where nothing is known at all. There are areas where there are only a few points and a few tentative lines, where the data is thin and not much is known. There are also areas of knowledge that are quite densely populated with data points. In these areas, the relationships between the points are relatively well understood, agreed upon, and the connecting lines are thick and plentiful.

But overall, it's mostly empty space.

When we want to answer a question, we drill down, through the layers of interpretation and commentary, to see whether there is a data point that directly answers our question. In most cases, specific questions do not directly hit a data point but fall in the spaces in between; there may be pieces of data related to our question but nothing which *directly* addresses it.

In these cases, the best we can do is attempt to interpolate from the closest (most relevant) points. Sometimes this interpolation is easy, with nearby data points providing an obvious answer on which most people can agree. But when the relevant data points get further away, when the links become more tenuous, interpretation becomes difficult and controversial.

There is no single agreed upon way to interpret most data because the process of interpretation is defined by personal bias. Interpretations are abstractions of the data

layer that form another mostly distinct layer of points and connections. Interpretations are shaped by the perceived relevance and reliability of selected points of data, by the assessed importance of relationships, by the views, biases, and opinions of the interpreter, and occasionally by fabricated or assumed data points. Data points that are considered spurious, inaccurate, or irrelevant are filtered out by the interpreter as the data is assembled into a sensible order. Interpretations are, in part, an attempt to fill in the empty space between the actual data points, so when we visualize the *interpretation layer*, the points and lines cover more space and their edges are less distinct—leaving less holes—than in the underlying data layer.

Because most answers are based on the interpretive layer, *who* answers a question is often as important as the underlying data itself.

When trying to answer the question "Is MDMA dangerous?" a physician working at a drug treatment program is more likely to heavily weigh reports of addiction and brain

Imagine each piece of data as a point of light in an infinite, 3-dimensional black space.

damage, while a transpersonal therapist might be more likely to value information about possible therapeutic uses and consider the relative danger of daily use of antidepressants.

Imagine looking at the actual data points related to MDMA neurotoxicity. One point may be, "When a Sprague-Dawley breed rat, housed in a small plastic box at 75°F, is given 5mg per kilogram of MDMA injected into their abdomen four times over the course of eight hours, it shows lasting reductions of serotonin and serotonin metabolites in several regions of its brain." For most people, this specific piece of data is of limited value. What do Sprague-Dawley breed rats

have to do with humans? How would this change if the MDMA were given orally rather than injected? How does that dose compare to a normal human dose and do lower doses produce the same effects? What effect do reduced serotonin levels have? Are the changes permanent or do serotonin levels return to normal?

There are thousands of similar data points, written in ScienceSpeak, that only a small portion of the population can read, let alone really understand. There is more data available in most specific fields than any single person can keep in their head at one time. And there is strong pressure, when trying to inform people, to simplify answers, to draw conclusions where there are still mostly questions. This pressure leads to oversimplifications that further introduce errors into the interpretive layer.

The image becomes more complicated when we consider that each apparent data point may or may not actually be “true”. It

could be false information, a typo, a misstatement of fact; it could be based on a political or moral viewpoint that one does not agree with. The data field of psychoactive drug information is polluted by many apparent data points that are political, legal, or moral views masquerading as “fact

Most people want simple answers, but the answers are seldom simple.

layer” data. As these pseudo-facts spread into the interpretive layers, the pollution also spreads.

Because the basic interpretive process requires so much specific skill and knowledge, we are forced to rely on layers of interpretation and abstracted information. We are dependent on generalizations and summaries. It becomes imperative that we

who accept answers from others consider what effect the funding, motivation, and viewpoint of those supplying answers might have on the conclusions they draw. We need to demand that answers come with ways to verify them independently.

One of the challenges we face, both as a species and with the Erowid Project, is to create better systems for improving the reliability and quality of complex information. One thing we believe will help improve the situation is for more people to offer interpretations of data that can easily be traced back to their anchor points in the vast web of data. Without being able to find the direct and explicit connections between interpretation and data, a view cannot easily be evaluated for its accuracy, even by those with expertise in the field.

We continue to work to provide people with more access to the web of data and the links between answers and underlying data layers. ●

Organizational Updates

Entheogen Review (entheogenreview.com)

The *Entheogen Review* is now in its 5th year of publication with David Aardvark as chief editor. *ER* had set 2002 as the year in which to reevaluate whether they should, despite low subscription rates, continue to publish. They have decided to continue publishing for at least another year.

Bluelight (bluelight.nu)

While at the NIDA conference in June (see report pg. 3), we had the opportunity to meet two representatives from Bluelight. We are currently working on a project with them to create a bluelight section of the Erowid Experience Vaults for reports posted by Bluelight community members. We hope this collaboration will add value to both the Bluelight and Erowid websites.

Alchemind (alchemind.org)

Effective September 1, 2002 the Alchemind Society has changed its name to the Center for Cognitive Liberty & Ethics. The name change was made because the concept of “cognitive liberty” has been gaining mainstream currency and the new name better facilitates continued acceptance of the concept. All members of the Alchemind Society will remain members (“friends”) of the CCLE.

DanceSafe (dancesafe.org)

DanceSafe reports that it recently admitted its 30th chapter in the United States and is now working on being able to include international chapters. DanceSafe Seattle (dancesafeseattle.org) is now repackaging standard test kits into convenient smaller sized kits which include, for \$20, all three reagents and a white tile for conducting testing, for \$20.

MAPS (maps.org)

MAPS’s MDMA/PTSD study continues to await approval by the institutional review board. MAPS is planning a November 14, 2002 seminar on MDMA/PTSD research, held in Tel Aviv for the Israeli government, as part of the process of trying to initiate an MDMA/PTSD pilot study in Israel.

MAPS’s current *Cannabis*-vaporizer study—evaluating the performance of two vaporizer units—is a preliminary step towards comparing the effectiveness of vaporizers with joints in a human trial. This study is being pursued under the assumption that the most likely way that smoked *Cannabis* would be approved by the FDA would be through the use of a vaporizer.

Council on Spiritual Practices (csp.org)

In August 2002, CSP awarded its 10th William James Award for Masters’ theses and doctoral dissertations focusing on empirical studies of primary religious experience and its consequences. See <http://csp.org/WmJamesAwards.html> for information about the projects that won their support.

DrugSense / MAP (drugsense.org)

DrugSense and the Media Awareness Project continue to thrive despite last year’s copyright setbacks. Their newest project is the completion of a drug reform contact database that Mark Greer predicts will revolutionize MAP’s volunteer activism by providing contact information for newspapers, broadcast media, and politicians around the United States. They have also finished a new categorized database of links to drug reform websites and a system for tracking non-text drug news called their “On Air” project.

Surveying Erowid

Results of Visitor Surveys Are In

by Fire & Earth Erowid

In May 2002 we began a series of surveys on the site, asking some basic questions about the views and opinions of our visitors. We ran three demographic surveys, each for a single 24 hour period. Two of the surveys contained a combination of two questions and the third was a single question. We were quite pleased with the response rate, receiving more than 2,280 responses to our first survey (approximately 10% of the site visitors for the day) and more than 4,000 total responses in three days.

It's important to note that these are **not** scientific surveys. We have no way to track those who respond, nor to verify that they replied truthfully to questions. We do limit responses to one per I.P. address, which stops individuals from answering the survey multiple times, but it's quite likely that some

responses are intentionally false.

1) Occupation & Reason for Visit

Our first survey contained a combination of two questions. The first asked which of the listed occupations best described each visitor and the second asked which category best described the reason for their visit to Erowid that day: personal interest, academic interest, professional interest, or concern for a child/friend.

Overall, more than 36% of those responding reported that they were students visiting out of personal interest. An additional 8% were students visiting for academic reasons. It's also interesting to note that while 22 individuals identified themselves as "Law Enforcement", five of those stated that they were visiting out of

personal interest and two out of concern for a friend/child.

2) Frequency of Erowid Visits

Our second survey asked how often each respondent visited the site. The results show that about half of our visitors are regulars (visit "daily" or "regularly"), about a quarter are infrequent visitors and 20% are first time visitors. This is consistent with past analysis of our log files which show that on any given day, about 50% of our viewers are people who have visited the site within the past month.

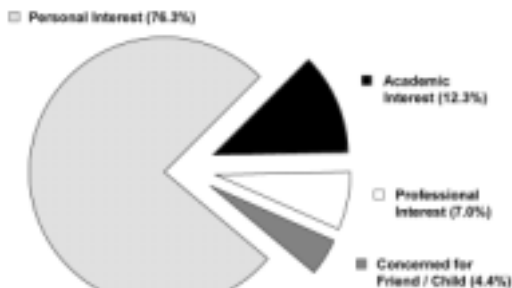
3) Employment Status & Age

Our third survey asked additional questions about the employment status and age of our visitors: 45% responded that they were students and 35% are between the ages of 18 and 22.

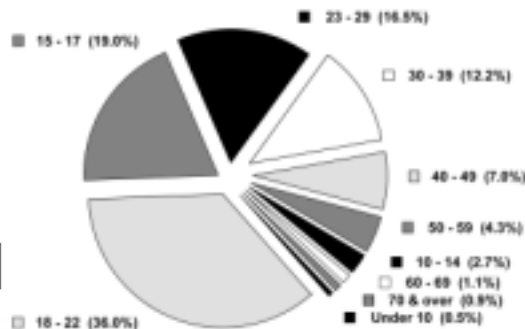
One notable result is that the number of people identifying themselves as students was extremely consistent between the first and second surveys (45.5% versus 46.7%).

Erowid.org/extracts/v2/survey1.shtml

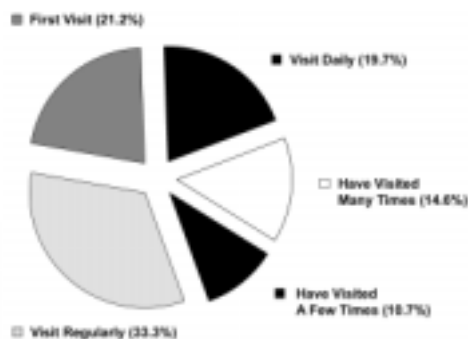
REASON FOR VISIT



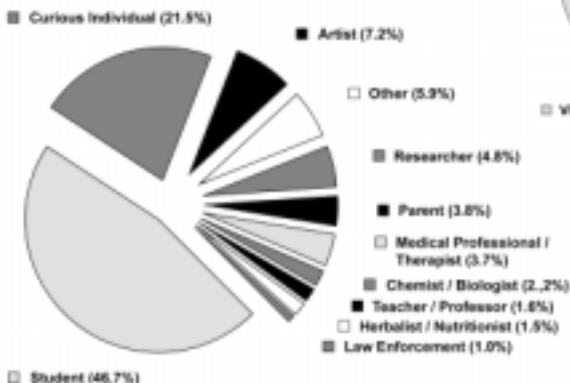
AGE



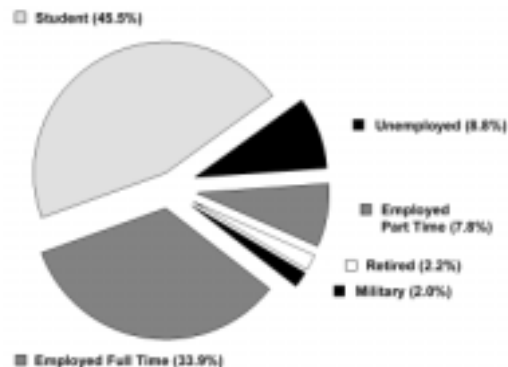
FREQUENCY OF EROWID VISITS



OCCUPATION



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



4) Ecstasy & Perception of Risk

In response to yet another error-ridden journal article published this summer, which repeated the unfounded assertion that ecstasy users “think ecstasy is safe”, British researcher Harry Sumnall and Earth Erowid came up with a preliminary web-based survey to see how Erowid visitors would report their perception of the safety of ecstasy use.

The survey was up for about two weeks and received around 950 total responses. Of these, 100 were deemed invalid because too little of the survey was filled out or the answers were obviously false.

The demographics of the respondents were about what we expected, with around 63% reporting they were age 13-21, 35% ages 22-35 and the rest over 35. As we anticipated, those interested in filling out a page long survey on ecstasy were somewhat younger on average than our general readership.

A statistically significant correlation was present between lifetime use, use per

individual episode, maximum used per episode, and amount used in the last six months: the greater the number of lifetime uses, the more likely the individual was to report higher typical dosages, higher maximum dosages, and more frequent use in the previous six months. Heavy lifetime users were more likely to still be current users. One obvious reason for this correlation is that people who had already ceased their use of ecstasy are less likely to be visiting the Erowid MDMA Vault.

When asked about the purity of the ecstasy they have purchased, 31.4% of respondents stated they were “usually certain” that their ecstasy was pure, while 22.8% were “never certain” that the ecstasy they took was pure (see below). Interestingly, there was no statistically significant correlation between lifetime usage and perceived purity of the substance.

Respondents were asked to rank the relative risks of 12 different substances as well as select for each substance the “absolute” risk. In the relative rankings,

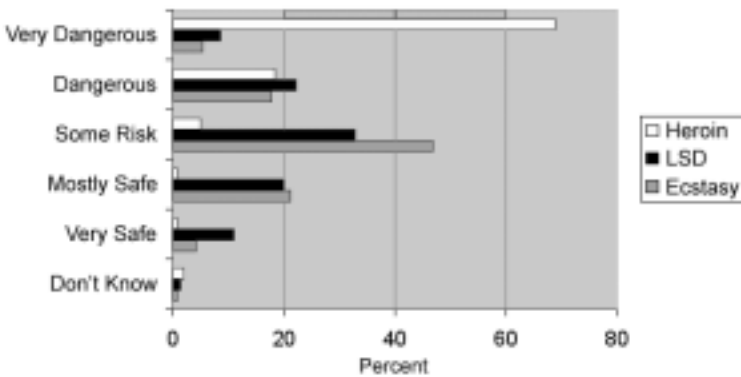
heroin was rated the most dangerous by nearly half of those who responded while over-the-counter pain medications (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.) were rated the least dangerous. Ecstasy and LSD were rated substantially less dangerous than heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, and PMA and slightly less dangerous than GHB, DXM, alcohol and cigarettes. When asked about absolute risks, 72.8% of respondents said they thought ecstasy use posed “some risk” or greater. About 21% said that ecstasy was “mostly safe” and only 4% said ecstasy was “very safe”.

The last question asked people to rank the relative credibility of 11 different information sources. Not surprisingly, Erowid and DanceSafe were ranked well above the rest, with “public school teachers” and “police” solidly at the bottom of the credibility rankings.

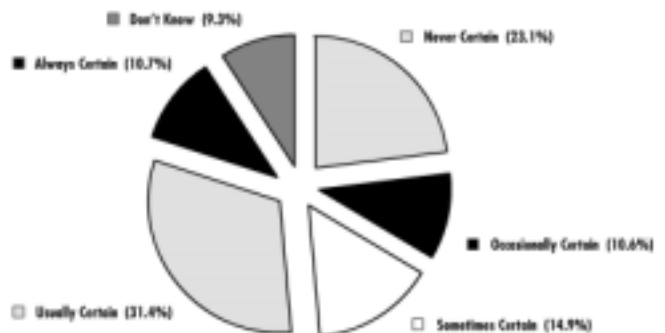
There are a few other points of interest in the results; if you’d like to read more, the full results can be found at:

Erowid.org/extracts/v2/survey_ecstasy1.shtml ●

RISK ASSESSMENT



CERTAINTY OF ECSTASY PURITY



ECSTASY USE HISTORY

	Mean	SD*	Range
Total Times Ecstasy Used	37.2	75.3	0 - 1000
Tablets per session	1.8	1.3	0 - 20
Maximum used/session	3.4	3.0	0 - 23
Uses in last 6 months	6.2	10.7	0 - 100

* SD = Standard Deviation, a measure of how widely answers vary from the average in a set

The Challenges of Visionary Parenting

by Sophie, Earth, & Fire

In January 2002, Erowid received a grant that made it possible to initiate the Families & Psychoactives Vault. The following is an introduction to the issues we are trying to address with this project.

There are many disparate views on how to live in a world with an ever-increasing variety of psychoactive plants, chemicals, and medications. The prevailing model for the recreational and spiritual use of psychoactives is still one of “zero tolerance”. In this view, there is only one acceptable choice, and all others are unmentionable. Although many people have developed a great deal of sophistication about how to integrate the presence of these substances into a healthy life, it is virtually taboo (and potentially criminal) to teach these insights and skills to younger generations. The current cultural context accepts stories of what doesn’t work but not of what does. This has led to a glaring lack of published stories about successful interactions between young adults and their elders around the topic of drugs.

An important distinction exists between chronicling what hasn’t worked (i.e. “drug war failures”) and visioning what *can* work. Tangible, thoughtful stories can move people to examine their own attitudes and in some cases to learn new modes of thinking and behaving. The lack of positive role models and specific approaches to emulate means that many parents and adults will choose to remain silent rather than being forced to forge their own way into unknown territory.

Despite adolescent recreational drug use being the focus of harsh criminal penalties and strong social disapproval, it remains a persistent feature in the lives of many youth in global, technological cultures. With major national surveys reporting earlier and earlier onset of the use of psychoactives, many parents begin to face the challenges of how to communicate about psychoactives when their children are in junior high or high school (ages 11-18).

In the United States, more than half of students in their final year of high school acknowledge they have used an “illicit substance”.¹ Their initiation is most likely to happen around the age of 16, a time some might argue is a natural transition point from child to adult. Perhaps because our society

It is rare for parents or other adults to actively engage their younger relatives and children on this topic.

lacks substantive rituals for marking this transition, many young people discover, whether consciously or unconsciously, that their experiences with licit and illicit substances act as *de facto* initiatory, or coming of age, experiences.

While initiatory experiences can be intentional and planned events at which the growing autonomy of the individual child is formally recognized by the parents and family, most initiatory experiences involving psychoactives in the United States are *ad hoc* initiations. These generally

involve teen peers, without parents or long-experienced adults to provide a sense of lifetime cycle. The profoundly important issue of consciousness-management is often left to the first chance encounter with a cute boy or girl with a joint or some ecstasy, the vagaries of rebellious inclinations, or the myriad other reasons teens decide to leap into the murky, fascinating pool of disapproved mind-alterants. But from an “official” standpoint, psychoactives are considered lurking evils that threaten teens and society, rather than being considered a part of the landscape of adolescence.

If we include alcohol and prescription psychoactives in the picture, the number of people in the U.S. who have tried a recreational psychoactive by the time they are 18 reaches more than 80 percent. With this in mind, it seems absurd that we are offered silence and calls of absolute abstinence as the only approved models. It’s clear that parents, adults, and society at large are afraid of the legal liabilities of assisting minors in their trials with psychoactives and that many parents are ignorant and/or scared of the entire concept of intentional consciousness alteration. Add these elements to the ever-present difficulty that adolescents face in navigating the shift from dependent child to independent adult, and we are left with a situation where a majority of people have to rediscover the well-known pitfalls and errors for themselves.

It is rare for parents or other adults to actively engage their younger relatives and children on this topic. Most people realize that it’s natural for kids to experiment, but they don’t want *their* kids involved because

of real and perceived dangers. And there is much to be concerned about: from catastrophic failures like addiction, accidents or bad trips, to discord with other family members over the issue, to arrest, prosecution and legal sanctions.

There are some resources—many subsidized by state and federal taxes—available for the parent who believes in “Just Say No”. Their primary message is that all disapproved psychoactives are functionally equivalent and that intentionally altering one’s consciousness is the moral equivalent of suicide.

But what about the parents, family friends, or older relatives who elect to play an active role in these initiations? Where does this leave the proactive parent? What resources are available that directly target someone who is facing the cross-generational challenge? Parents who want to “talk to their kids about drugs” in a way that moves beyond zero tolerance find themselves with limited outside resources. The resources that *are* available are often hard to find or too generic to meet the specific issues any particular family faces.

Some resources exist in models from traditional cultures, such as ayahuasca-using peoples, tribes with long histories of peyote use, and the like. Unfortunately, while they may offer many useful insights, it is not obvious how these models can be applicable for most people in the U.S. or other highly mobile, media-permeated societies. Powerful psychoactives are omnipresent in our culture, from academic performance-enhancing stimulants such as Ritalin (methylphenidate) and Adderall (amphetamine), to the universally available *Cannabis*, to ecstasy at parties and events. We, as a global society, are faced with a unique set of circumstances that are not likely to fit any previous solution.

It is the goal of Erowid’s Families & Psychoactives project to help publicly document non-prohibitionist role models that parents and families can utilize to make more informed choices. Perhaps accounts that illustrate the routes some families have tried can contribute to the construction of role models to help others through existing and future challenges. With this as the goal, Erowid has been speaking with people who have inspiring or challenging stories to share

about how their families have dealt with psychoactive use. While these efforts have not always been wildly successful, they do broaden the spectrum of the “families and drugs” topic from a non-prohibitionist standpoint.

What resources are available for someone who is facing the cross-generational challenge?

Following is a list of objectives for the first phase of the Families & Psychoactives project:

- 1) Conduct interviews with people who have been part of a family that has discussed or used psychoactives in an intentional manner. Where possible, include both generations involved. For example, where a parent-child interaction has happened, try to get perspectives from both the parent and child.
- 2) Focus on individuals who have had positive experiences in order to document role models and to counter the current imbalance towards stories of tragedy and failure.
- 3) Collect information about what legal and social risks parents and families face for sharing information or psychoactive

substances with younger members of the family.

- 4) Document the common ground that exists between prohibitionist and reform views on this issue; emphasize what people from different ends of the spectrum agree upon.
- 5) Compile links to interviews, articles and organizational resources for people inquiring about parenting, rites of passage, and other family-related topics as they pertain to psychoactives. Include links to both prohibitionist and reform websites.

Erowid is seeking individuals who have first-hand experience with these issues. People who grew up in a household where psychoactives were discussed, parents who have chosen to talk to their children about psychoactives, or others who have had related experiences, and those who are interested in exploring these issues further are invited to contact us at families@erowid.org or visit the Families & Psychoactives Vault.

[Erowid.org/psychoactives/families/](http://erowid.org/psychoactives/families/) ●

1. Monitoring the Future Study, the University of Michigan (2001). *Table 1. Trends in Lifetime Prevalence of Use of Various Drugs for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders*. Retrieved August 14, 2002 from: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/data/01data/pr0111.pdf>

New Books of Interest

- 1 *Zig Zag Zen: Buddhism and Psychedelics*, Allan Hunt Badiner, Editor.
A series of essays on psychedelics and buddhism by authors such as Huston Smith and Roger Walsh. Beautifully illustrated with visionary art. (Chronicle Books)
- 2 *Brugmansia and Datura*, Ulrike and Hans-Georg Preissel.
A comprehensive identification and cultivation guide for Angel’s Trumpets and thorn Apples. Includes more than a hundred beautiful photographs. (Firefly)
- 3 *The Simple Plant Isoquinolines*, Alexander Shulgin.
A dense reference book for isoquinolines found in cacti and other plants. Not the long-awaited follow-up to PIHKAL/TIHKAL, but a step closer. (Transform)
- 4 *Hallucinogens: A Reader*, Charles Grob, Editor.
A collection of essays from some of the leading writers in the field of psychedelics: Albert Hofmann, Ralph Metzner, Terence McKenna, and more. (Tarcher / Putnam)

ALBERT HOFMANN'S COLLECTION OF

by Earth Erowid

LSD and Psilocybin- Related Papers



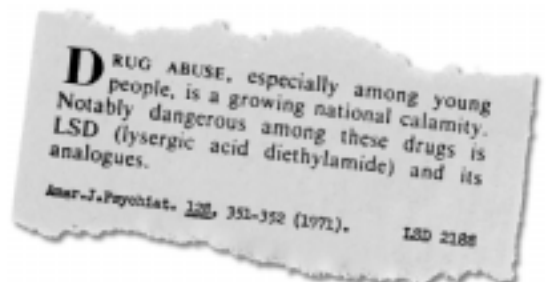
In the early 1950s, Sandoz Pharmaceutical in Switzerland began building a collection of LSD and psilocybin-related articles as part of Albert Hofmann's work with these substances. Sandoz continued adding to this collection for nearly 35 years, gathering more than 4,000 documents on the topic. The collection now consists of a nearly complete archive of historical LSD and psilocybin journal articles from the late 1940s through the early 1980s, as well as a small number of student theses, newspaper clippings, shipping manifests, and similar unique items.

As the library was being built, each newly published article was acquired by Sandoz, given a unique identifying number ("LSD 1" through "LSD 3758"), and then added to the collection in numerical order. Somewhere along the line, the articles were

taped into matching binders carefully labelled with the LSD numbers they contained. Two sets of hand-typed index books, in the tradition of card catalogs, were also created. The first index simply listed the basic reference (title, journal, author, publication date) for each sequentially numbered article. The second index listed references and abstracts, again ordered by the master LSD numbers. These binders—79 containing LSD articles, 9 containing psilocybin articles, 13 abstract books and 9 reference books—were then stored in a library at Sandoz Pharmaceuticals where they were available to Albert Hofmann and other researchers working with LSD.

In the mid 1990s, as Sandoz was preparing to merge with pharmaceutical competitor Ciba, the collection was scheduled to be destroyed.¹ With Dr.

Hofmann's approval, the Sandoz board granted the collection to the Albert Hofmann Foundation (www.hofmann.org) and in the fall of 1996 the bound books were shipped to Los Angeles. The collection became the cornerstone of the Albert Hofmann Foundation's Museum of Psychedelic History, where it was displayed for eight months during 1998. Unfortunately, lack of funds caused the museum to close and the collection was again put in storage.²



During the late 1990s, the Albert Hofmann Foundation, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, and the Heffter Research Institute began the collaborative process of creating a digital index of the papers. The intention of this stage of the project was to create a comprehensive list of all the articles contained in the collection. But due to various circumstances, the group creating the digital index did not have full access to the collection. Instead they worked from a subset of the bound index books, resulting in an incomplete digital index that contained a confusing patchwork of entries.

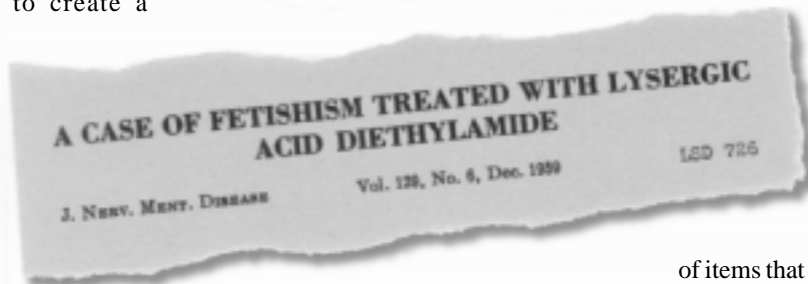
The Index

In early 2001, Rick Doblin of MAPS asked Fire and me to help assess the status of the collection, and in March we flew to Los Angeles as part of an evaluation team with Eric Katt and Michael Greene from MAPS. Our primary goal was to determine what would be required to complete the goal of making a digital archive of the entire collection. At the time we believed there was already a complete digital index of papers, so we were primarily interested in assessing the physical condition of the collection. We needed to determine how best to digitize the articles without doing damage to them.

Once there we met with Myron Stolaroff (of the Albert Hofmann Foundation) and the individual who housed the collection to discuss the project. We quickly discovered that the digital archive project was in a far more confusing state than we had anticipated. Some articles included both the reference and abstract while more than half had no entry at all. We could discern no pattern as to what had been entered and what had not, making it a somewhat complex puzzle to try to piece together.

Our project scope shifted to encompass the re-verification of the existing digital index. Since that initial visit and assessment a year and a half ago, Erowid has done a complete evaluation of all of the titles contained in

the collection, created a new, complete digital index and verified each entry at least three times. Though undoubtedly errors remain—due to pieces missing from the original collection and the tedious nature of entering and checking thousands of scientific



references—we are pleased with the overall level of accuracy we have achieved with the index.

To Scan or Not To Scan

Throughout this process, there has been tension between viewing the collection as a historical artifact—with its primary value as an undisturbed antique from a bygone time—and viewing it as a valuable repository of data. When viewing it as an artifact to be preserved, the digitization project could be seen as an act that reduces or destroys its value. When viewing it as a collection of historically important information, which as a whole would be nearly impossible to re-collect, creating a searchable database of scanned documents incalculably increases the value of both the collection and the research it documents.

Although questions concerning the ethics of archive management are not uncommon in library science, this is the first time we ourselves have encountered the issue. Not surprisingly, we fell squarely on the side of digitization. But many factors were taken

into consideration before the decision was made to digitize the collection.

The bound collection was made up of copies of articles which had been previously published elsewhere, and contained no one-of-a-kind or hand-written documents. The value of these articles lies in the information they contain. This value was determined to be greater than the value of the papers remaining untouched in their original bindings. The small handful of items that are unique to the Sandoz library were not fastened into the original binders and did not require removal.

The original books were still mostly intact but were beginning to show damage from age. They would not be able to be displayed and handled in a library setting without incurring further damage. For long term preservation the collection needs to be completely rebound; this can still be done. The digitization process has left the documents better preserved than they were originally.

The most compelling reason for going forward with the project is that it provides dramatically more access to the library for a world-wide audience. While the few people who might have a chance to view the physical collection in the future will no longer be able to see it in its untouched original bindings, many thousands will gain access to the information it contains.

Based on these considerations, it was decided that creating a full digital archive of the documents made it worth dismantling the books.

Digitization

In March 2002, Fire and I moved the physical collection to our home in Skylonda, where we spent several weeks preparing the documents for digitization. With the help of Brandy from MAPS, thousands of articles were carefully removed from their original binding. In many cases this was as simple as wiggling the article, at which point the binding tape, no longer adhesive after 35 years, would simply release. In other cases, the tape was carefully cut to allow the article to be removed.



The documents were then evaluated, one by one, to determine whether they were in good enough condition to withstand the process of mass scanning. Hundreds of the more delicate articles were set aside to be scanned by hand, while the rest were sent to a commercial scanning company. After digitization, each article was slipped into an archival quality plastic

or summary. In addition, about 10% of the physical documents have some sort of defect or problem that reduces their readability, and a few are really quite unreadable.

One of the most common problems is that the tape used to attach the papers to the original binders was, in many cases, placed over some portion of the text. Over the years,

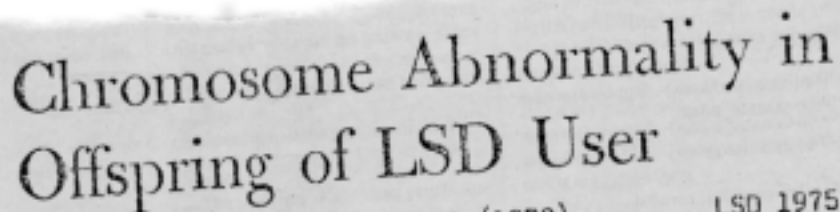
“Touching history is very exciting for me. Entering thousands of entries into a database is not. Nor are removing tape, sorting papers, or digging through musty filing cabinets. However, this seemingly uninspiring work gave me the chance to touch both the past and future of psychedelic research...”

— Brandy, *MAPS Bulletin*, Summer 2002

sleeve and placed, back in sequential order, into new binders. The original binders, now empty of papers, remain with the collection.

The current collection consists of more than 4,000 individual documents, approximately 80% English and 20% foreign language. Of these, we are missing perhaps a few hundred full texts, although in most of these cases we have an abstract

the adhesive on the aging tape soaked into the paper and left a residue that makes the covered text nearly unreadable. Other articles were printed on paper that simply couldn't withstand the test of time, yellowing or fading so much that there is little contrast left between text and paper. Many of the papers were just very poor photocopies to begin with and the generational loss in scanning makes them difficult to read and impossible to OCR.



Chromosome Abnormality in
Offspring of LSD User

J. Amer. med. Ass. 211, 987-990 (1970).

LSD 1975

The Albert Hofmann collection contains nearly seventy articles on the topic of whether or not LSD-25 causes “chromosome damage”. These articles are a good example of the scientific and cultural moral panic that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1967, *Science* published an article, based on the examination of a single patient, which proposed that LSD caused chromosome

breakage.¹ As Peter Stafford notes in *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, “By evening, the charge that LSD could break chromosomes was in all the nation’s media.”

Between 1967 and 1972, article after article was published, in respected peer-reviewed journals, describing the link between LSD and chromosomal damage, both in vitro and in users and their offspring. As these reports accumulated, popular media amplified

When the digital collection becomes publicly available—through both the Erowid and MAPS websites—our hope is that visitors will help us find copies of both missing and damaged articles, somewhere in the world, to add to this collective digital archive.

In the last stage of work before the digitization process is complete, crew members Fing, Tonx, Sophie, Scruff, and Brandy are combing through the scanned articles, checking for readability, looking for scanning errors, and making sure that each database entry is connected to the correct document. Once this process is complete, all that remains is some final display design. A preliminary version will be available by the time you have a chance to read this article.

The entire paper collection, now some 30 large boxes of material, is scheduled to be shipped back to Switzerland at the beginning of October 2002 where it will hopefully take its place in a new library.

Working on this project provided the very interesting opportunity to sift through articles about a wide gamut of “scientific research”. Topics range from the prosaic, like the use of LSD in psychotherapy and the hubbub over chromosome damage (see below); to the creative, studying the effects of LSD on artistic expression or handwriting⁴; to the bizarre and unexpected, like submerging snails in an LSD solution and recording their reaction.³

the scare, leading to sensational articles decrying the mutations that would be unleashed on future generations.

“New research finds [LSD] is causing genetic damage that poses a threat of havoc now and appalling abnormalities for generations yet unborn.”²

Yet, by the mid-1970s, the tide had turned and the scientific literature generally supported the revised opinion that LSD does *not* cause chromosomal breakage or birth defects.

How was it possible for this issue to progress as far as it did? In an atmosphere friendly to reports of negative

This library is particularly valuable as a historical archive because of the rarity of many of the articles. Pubmed, the primary public U.S. database of scientific articles (pubmed.org), does not list any articles published earlier than 1964, is missing many articles up through the late 1960s, and doesn't include abstracts for many papers published earlier than 1990. University libraries are beginning to cull their physical collections, making it increasingly difficult to get public access to older articles from even the major

"In checking PDFs and reading over many titles and abstracts, I was struck by how quaint or dated some of this research seemed. This collection really illustrates how, just as with the creative arts, science is directly affected by the vagaries of fashion and cultural milieu."

— Sophie

journals. In fact, over the years, many articles about LSD and psilocybin have been cut out of journals or entire issues have been stolen by interested parties. This collection contains many articles which are nearly impossible to find in either physical or digital format—including older articles, and articles from uncommon, out-of-print, and foreign

journals. We're pleased to be able to take advantage of the hard work Sandoz put into collecting these papers over the years and hope it will help ensure that future students and researchers have access to the historical record of early psychedelic research.

The direct costs of this project (supplies, scanning costs and outside labor) were funded by MAPS, through a grant from the Promind Foundation. Erowid's work on the project has been conducted as part of our general mission, supported by memberships and individual donations. ●

1. Stolaroff M. "The Hofmann Report". *MAPS Bulletin*. Spring 1988; 8(1):43-47.
2. Beresford J. Personal Communication. Aug 2002.
3. Abramson HA, Jarvik MEJ. "Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25): IX. Effect on snails." *J Psychol*. 1955; 40:337. LSD #115.
4. Hirsch MW, Jarvik ME, Abramson HA. "Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25): XVIII. Effects of LSD-25 and six related drugs upon handwriting." *J Psychol*. 1956; 41:11. LSD #118.



Science à la mode

One reason that a historical record of past research is valuable is to document the mistakes which have been made. As the LSD and chromosome damage issue (below) highlights, erroneous conclusions may appear valid when they are based on too little evidence or when they result from research that looks for a specific answer.

Another key value of having access to a collection of research spanning several decades is to track how much of what is published in respected journals represents shifting cultural fads, moral views, or contemporary politics. This collection provides rich research possibilities not only for its explicit content, but for its value to anthropologists and historians who are interested in the meta-processes by which science and research are woven into the broader cultural tapestry. It is with the curious eye of an anthropologist that one discovers gems like the following, published in 1968 by the *New England Journal of Medicine* in a "scientific" review article by DB Louria (LSD #1639):

"Even more important, the widespread use of LSD, or similar drugs waiting in the psychedelic wings, could lead to a whole generation of psychedelic dropouts, incapable of and uninterested in addressing themselves to the important sociologic problems that challenge our times. If this happened the very structure of this democratic society would be threatened."

consequences of LSD use, a litany of elementary scientific and research errors were ignored by the journals that published the findings. It wasn't until enough research could be conducted to counteract the initial momentum that saner opinions, and better science, prevailed.

In the collection is a copy of one of the key articles that helped end the hysteria that was taking place in peer reviewed journals and the media. The authors conclude that:

"From our own work and from a review of the literature, we believe that pure LSD ingested in

moderate doses does not damage chromosomes in vivo, does not cause detectable genetic damage, and is not a teratogen or a carcinogen in man. Within these bounds, therefore, we suggest that, other than during pregnancy, there is no present contraindication to the continued controlled experimental use of pure LSD."³

The progression of this issue and its related articles is a perfect example of how dozens of journal references supporting one position may still be wrong. In many cases, only time and the evolution of knowledge can sort it out.

It would be interesting to read a retrospective on this part of psychedelic research history. ●

1. Cohen MM, Marinello MJ, Back N. "Chromosomal damage in human leukocytes induced by lysergic acid diethylamide." *Science*. 1967; 155:1417-19. LSD #1506.
2. Davidson B. "The Hidden Evils of LSD." *Saturday Evening Post*. Aug 12, 1967; 19.
3. Dishotsky NI, Loughman WD, Mogar RE, Lipscomb WR. "LSD and genetic damage. Is LSD chromosome damaging, carcinogenic, mutagenic, or teratogenic?" *Science* 1971; 172:431-440. LSD #2145.

Infinity of the Now

AN EXPERIENCE WITH N,N-DMT

by SYNCHROJET



I first tried N,N-DMT years ago, but failed to achieve effects because the smoke was too harsh. The following is an account of my second attempt—and first experience—with this substance.

I had done a great deal of LSD and mushrooms, and considered myself experienced in terms of psychedelia. Having taken over ten grams of mushrooms more than once, I felt that I could always remind myself that I, as the observer, had made a choice. This was ridiculous.

My trip guide was an intelligent man in his fifties (I was thirty) who had also introduced me to peyote. We agreed that the experience would occur at his place, and all of the usual pre-trip steps were taken: fasting, meditation, and so on.

My meditations up until this time were a facade, although I was not yet aware of this fact. When meditating, I simply thought about myself. Real hard. Even some of the more difficult mushroom experiences that I had undergone had not purged me of buried feelings of inadequacy. This is important to mention, because I did not understand something VERY crucial: that I was not trying DMT to learn, but rather, to PROVE something to myself.

The DMT crystals were smoked from a pipe with a few tobacco grounds. I was able to draw a good amount from the end of the pipe, and while I tried to hold the smoke, I could not. I exhaled, half expecting that I would get only a “museum dose” of the compound.

I have read much literature about DMT, but nothing has come close to describing even the most minuscule element of the following experience.

I did not notice any distortions before my mind went. The feeling is very difficult to relate in words. Imagine discovering your own mind is a map, a very small representation of a very large idea, and suddenly discovering that it was, in fact, a foldable map which had been folded for all time.

I sensed my mind was flat and inadequate, and that I had been folded up and put away centuries ago. I was discarded. I was effluent. I was a remnant of a grand theme, once possible, but now ruined and shattered. As a conscious entity I could not be destroyed, but only amused. The amusement ended when the occlusion to its purpose ended, and I became immediately and powerfully aware of my SOLITUDE.

I cannot recall the transition to the void. There were no colors or visions in the traditional sense. I realized immediately that this was not a DMT trip at all; I had actually poisoned myself and this was death.

There was no sensation of time. Nothing was linear, and my ideas seemed to come to me at impossible intervals. My brain had been killed, I could tell, because I could not think. I could only sense overwhelming loneliness and shame. I had actually believed at some point, somewhere, that I was alive. But this was not possible because I was a scrap of discarded thought not worth keeping.

This seemed to be forever.

There appeared in the vastness a tiny point of light. I remember realizing that I had not died at all, but that I had been dead. Then, not dead but dormant. DORMANT. I was about to be born.

The feeling of flying is not an accurate description of the sensation that accompanied my movement toward the point, which was gold, and—to my surprise—actually metallic. I came upon the source, a DNA scarab, a construct, an insect of impossible dimensions miles in diameter and circumference.

The skin of the carapace was polished to a high sheen and thin to the point of transparency. I could see tiny, endless arrangements of gears and pinions just beneath the gold wing. Tiny points of alien light darted from molecular points of cognitive energy, impossible in color and detail, billions of precision gears generating

consciousness, which was traversing a planned route, terrifying in its complexity, but beautiful in its exactitude.

I followed a point to the top of the scarab’s enormous body. It had a tiny human head, the size of a marble, attached via a series of DNA strands that had been transformed into a clear metal. The head was unaware of my presence but its small mouth opened to speak.

From the mouth came forth the matured beam of thought that had started from a cog (Cognition) in the belly of the insect. The cog had grown as it rose to the head, morphing into a form of concentrated phosphene light. The beam poured from the tiny mouth and enveloped me in a punctuated green geometry of raw cognition, without ego and with a destination.

I rode in the singular idea, aware of its purity and clarity and above all its sense of purpose, and fell to a violet montage of heads that were dislocated and ethereal but awaiting its arrival.

I was suddenly inside of a brain and I became instantly aware of the physicality of the idea, which was *a note of music*. It was then revealed to me on a large screen,

I, in my mediocrity, was a necessary element of greatness. This eased my spirit.

attached to a gleaming wall, that the brain was the brain of Bach. The idea was one in a stream of many which fell to his shaking hand in a dimly lit room. Flickering with candlelight on heavy curtains, the idea fell to the point of his pen, where it was transcribed in ink and solidified forever.

This happened concurrently with the *hearing* of that exact note, in that exact piece of music, namely, the second of Six Motets by Bach. I had, in some elusive past, cued

that CD to play while I tripped; and I was now in that precise moment which occurred exactly then and only then, and which required of the universe the creation of cognition and the receiving thereof, in order to hear that one note.

I saw the fatigue on the wrinkled forehead of the great master Johann Sebastian Bach, and his music was alive. I watched the transcription through a telescope from a starship, and realized that it was diminished only by my yearning to become a stenographer of music. My own music seemed like noise.

This thought was addressed by a small man sitting in a plant who told me I was mediocre. He said my mediocrity had a function, which was to define what is great and what is not, because how can the great be great if there is no mediocrity?

I, in my mediocrity, was a necessary element of greatness. This eased my spirit.

* * * * *

At that point I found myself lying on a couch experiencing a fleeting sensation of having taken a drug. I realized that my heart was not beating and that I was trying to enter my own body. I saw the fear in my own eyes and was saddened by my weakness.



I became preoccupied with my lying. Everything I was, was lies. I was a liar. Even lying down, I was lying, always lying. My existence was a tangled cluster of lies, canceling themselves out, struggling to make sense, surviving only on the energy that others gave when they turned to see the freak who could not tell the truth. And so I had lied to myself about DMT. It was not a hallucinogen. It was a poison, used by liars to destroy themselves. I watched lies come out of my mouth. They were giant, glistening centipedes, hideously related in a mutant way to the glorious insects of

cognition, but bastardized and diminished. I saw broken gears in their grotesque bodies, and they came from my own mouth while I lay there, motionless.

I realized that they were being driven from me. I was undergoing a type of exorcism. I became aware of a ram, on a hill of purple grass, beyond a rushing stream of beautiful microscopic geometries. The ram had eyes all over its head and beside it was a horse that was ten feet tall at the shoulder and breathing heavily. The horse watched, and then ran towards a greying horizon, while overhead a silver sun was spinning soundlessly.

The ram had driven the lies from me. I approached the stream and saw there were machines in it. I was told not to touch the water but to find the crossing. I realized that the cross of Christ was not a cross but a crossing, from judgement into salvation. The stories of religion were allegories, forming themselves again and again until they could be superimposed over the framework of machinery that was my own personal syntax.

I realized the glory, the importance, of TRUTH. The truth was that my fear ruled my existence.

Could salvation be truth?

I was guided to my soft, pink brain by a dragonfly, which was piloted by a man with no eyes.

It is impossible to adequately relate to readers that all of the above was occurring simultaneously, and yet in right angles, and moreover, in a corner of a pile of powder on a floor, into which my eyeballs fell, and the dust did adhere.

I sat up but did not move.

There was, in the "comedown", a moment of such beauty, when I became aware of the Motets playing, still playing, perfectly and crisply, while I lay on the couch being born. My arm was hanging off the side of the couch, and there was my friend, watching a ball of regurgitated and spoiled silliness (television?). He was unaware of my fear and astonishment but turned his head to look at me.

Writing this seems like a wisp of a tentacle that remains, and seems like punishment, because it involves the re-integration of an ego so shattered, and yet necessary for day to day function. I am acutely aware of my lies, insofar as I

cannot express what happened, no matter how hard I try.

As I read over what I have typed, I understand that I have only served to diminish the experience, and turn it into an absurdly inadequate written version of a cinematic version of a non-cinematic event. What do I say from here?

A lot of people talk about how tragic life would be if one's most profound experiences occurred under the influence of a drug.

Those people are unwatered seeds.

I have done DMT two other times. Each was more fantastic than the preceding. Indescribable, every second. A part of me is

I cannot communicate how my DMT experience altered everything forever. . . .

convinced that this drug, this molecule, is alive, and was once married to us, and has since been divorced, and we are therefore in a state of bereavement and mourning.

Then I realize that we are longing, as humans, for contact, any contact, with ourselves and those whom we love, and that contact is so elusive and seemingly inadequate. And yet, every touch and word from another is a precious singularity, never to be repeated, but only diminished by retelling, and remembering, and finally, fading away.

I cannot communicate how my DMT experience altered everything forever. It was after this experience that I stopped all cocaine and crack, for good, never to visit them again. They are my enemy. I was taught this on, and by, DMT.

To those of you who are considering trying DMT, I would say, do not consider this account to be even a shred of what you should expect, there is NOTHING that could have prepared me. There is no comparison to LSD, and while there may be some allegorical connection to the mushroom, the mushroom is like a movie of the life of DMT.

I have talked incessantly to many people about the experiences I have had, and I wanted to share some aspects of this infinity here, if for no other reason than to stimulate thought and curiosity.

DMT is bigger than me. ●

EXPERIENCE REPORT REVIEWING

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly

by the Erowid Reviewing Crew

The Experience Vaults are one of the most popular parts of Erowid, cumulatively getting well over 30,000 page views per day. They provide the closest thing we have to public forums where visitors can submit their ideas and opinions for public display.

Because experience reports by definition are subjective, they are put through less fact-checking than many other types of articles on Erowid. But they do go through a lengthy process of approval. The two most common questions we receive about the Experience Vaults are whether the reports are checked or reviewed at all, and why a particular submitted report has not yet been displayed on the site. This article is an introduction to the Erowid Experience Vaults, how reports are chosen for publication, and what type of reports do not make it onto the site.

The Mission

From the start it's been obvious that experience reports are an integral part of the

data about psychoactive substances. If nothing else is known about a plant or chemical, a lot can be learned from a few well-written reports of their use.

The design goal of the Experience Vaults is to act as a categorized repository for the long-term collection of people's experiences with both psychoactive substances and techniques, and to make those experiences easily available to people searching for information about reported use, effects, problems, and benefits. Our editorial goals are to weed out completely fraudulent entries and to keep the texts focused on the first-person experiences of the authors. The vision that keeps the project moving is one of 100,000 reports on a thousand different substances or techniques, all categorized, rated, and searchable as part of the public knowledge-base.

The Past

From 1996 through mid-1998 the "system" we used for publishing experiences

was simply to request permission to use reports that we found on email lists or web boards and to ask specific individuals to write up their unusual experiences. In 1998, we created a simple web form for the submission of reports, which forwarded the stories to us by email. While this had the advantage of allowing anonymous submissions, it quickly became burdensome, as it was our policy for both Fire and Earth to read each report before we would publish it on the site (in hand-coded HTML). Eventually, we started to accumulate a large backlog of reports with no way to allow other crew members to review them while still maintaining oversight of the collection.

The Present

The third generation of the Experience Vaults—launched in June 2000 and still in use today—introduced a much more formalized and improved review system that has allowed us to publish more than 3,500 reports in the last two years. The Erowid

Initial Impressions, by Scotto

As Earth explained to me how to benchmark the average report, I was surprised to realize that the average report was of considerably poorer quality than I'd expected. It's easy to be arrogant and judgemental, especially because I consider myself a writer, but that was what I had to get over. I had to make a distinction between my perception of the quality of the writing versus the potential value of the actual content of the writing. It took a while to get used to.

I think the most dispiriting aspect of reviewing is how much destructive use gets reported as if it were wonderful recreational use. On the one hand that's also me being arrogant and judgemental; clearly there's a line between what some consider acceptable and what others consider destructive. But by the same token, in

some cases I can clearly see harm in the patterns of use described, if only by my own standards, and it's challenging to remain relatively unbiased about evaluating the worth of the report in those cases.

The flip side is that I still see people having remarkable experiences, often in reports from those who are at the earliest stages of their psychedelic career. When I read reports by 19-year-olds and witness the sense of wonder they're experiencing, or the confusion, it gives me the opportunity to see my own experiences with a fresh eye. It helps remind me to take a step back from how jaded I usually am, to not be so "been there, done that." There are still a lot of people out there who are stumbling into this enormous world of psychedelics for the first time. When I was 19 years old and first started taking psychedelics, I instinctively looked for answers to difficult questions that the experiences raised. Our college library had a couple of Tim Leary

books, which are definitely not beginner-level texts. Alt.drugs was a wasteland back then. It's still a wasteland, but there's so much more than Usenet now. It's exciting to think that in a relatively short time span, resources such as Erowid have developed to offer something more concrete to new users than I was able to find during my relatively isolated novice period.

Another thing reviewing experience reports constantly reminds me is that it's not easy to do the work of writing up experiences. It's really easy to have a weekend trip that seems remarkable and then by Monday be too busy and tired to write about it. There seems little incentive. I often ask myself, "What is there novel to say about my experience?" It really does get challenging to force yourself to try to write it down.

experience admin system allows Erowid crew members to review incoming submissions, categorize them by substance and type of experience, then edit, rate and approve them. The primary principle of the design is that at least two knowledgeable and trained reviewers read each submitted report before it is considered a permanent part of the archive.

When a first-stage reviewer approves a report it becomes publicly viewable, but it also enters a list of reports awaiting secondary approval. If a second-tier reviewer also approves the report, it is considered to have received “final” approval and becomes a permanent part of the collection (although it can always be taken down by a site admin). If, on the other hand, a first level reviewer “trashes” a submission, it does not get displayed but instead enters a list of reports awaiting secondary “trashing”. When a report is trashed by a second tier reviewer, it is permanently deleted.

The Problem

It’s not obvious at first glance how challenging and time consuming it can be to review incoming reports. It takes time to read a full text, determine whether to approve or reject it, then set all relevant categories and ratings. Generally the better a report is, the easier it is to review. While some reports are well written and a joy to read, it is much more difficult to decide what to do with the other 80%.

With each report that comes in, we feel a strong sense of obligation to honor the energy and time that the author took to write

up their experience and submit it to us. Even—or perhaps *especially*—when reports are badly written, or describe types of use that seem less than ideal, it can be draining to decide that someone else’s story isn’t worth publishing. And yet, as publishers, it’s our job to examine incoming reports and make educated decisions about how to apply a set of reasonable criteria for inclusion or exclusion. There are Experience Report Reviewing guidelines which spell out the general parameters by which reviewers judge submitted reports.

“While I am rather forgiving with regard to spelling and style, if I have to work to make sense of a report, I am likely to delete it.”
— Scruff

Accept or Reject: We reject reports we believe to be falsified, reports which are impossible to read because of bad grammar or spelling, reports which have no content related to any topic we cover, and reports which consist only of a litany of activities engaged in *while* high but don’t address the effects of the substance. Nearly half of all submitted reports fall into one of these categories.

Report Rating: Reports are assigned an overall rating (“Amazing” to “Marginal”), which determines where they show up in the lists of publicly displayed reports, and whether they are listed as “Erowid recommended”. Less than 1% of displayed

reports receive a rating of “Amazing” and another percent are rated “Very Good”, while most reports are rated in the “Average” range.

There is also a rating called “Cellar”. If a report is considered unfit for display, but contains some tiny bit of relevant data that we don’t want to lose, it is relegated to the cellar, undisplayed but still available for internal research. Examples would be a report that mentions hospitalization but provides no verifiable details or contact information; a very poor quality report which describes a reaction or effect we haven’t heard of; or a report of a rare combination of substances that we don’t find credible.

Rating is necessarily a subjective and highly personal process and it can be touchy to grade other people’s writing. At this point we choose not to clearly display report ratings because we are aware how seriously some people take this type of judgement.

Text Editing: Some editing is done on the text of most reports, although we don’t generally fix minor spelling and grammar errors. Our policy is to fix only a few errors per report in order to retain a strong sense of the author’s writing skill and style.

We feel that artificially polishing each report would sanitize the incoming data, making it hard to identify the original voice of the author. Often the diction, style, spelling, and grammar of a report are all one has to get a sense who the author is, what their level of education is, who they are. These stylistic issues, which can often be distracting to read through, are also very much part of the data of a given report.

Most Common Reasons Reports Are Deleted

Weak in Content Reports that contain very little beyond a mention of the drug a person took and then a description of what they did: “We drove around in Bud’s car, then we went to the mall, then we walked to the quickie-mart, played video games, and everything was really bright and we laughed a lot.”

Not Credible Occasionally we get a report that just sounds utterly implausible. It’s impossible to tell with what frequency spurious reports are submitted, but a reviewer can often get a sense of whether a report is completely fabricated.

Difficult to Read Many of the reports we receive are incredibly difficult to read. Some are submitted in all capital letters (or with no capital letters) with no punctuation or paragraph breaks, others are such spelling and grammar disasters that they are completely unreadable. These sorts of reports are generally rejected immediately.

Reviewers have a lot of leeway if they feel a writer’s unusual style is artistic, but the basic rule is that if a flexible, college-level English reader can’t make sense of it, it’s not appropriate for the Vaults.

Very Uninteresting Reports that are extremely redundant and offer no real interest, data, or color to the world. There are a lot of below-marginally written reports, about common substances, that we decline to publish.

What Was That? It’s not always clear from a report what substance a person actually took. While we do have a category for reports about substances that turned out not to be what the author expected, not being able to identify what substance was ingested makes reports virtually useless, and therefore these are usually deleted.

Preserving the voice of the author both helps to capture the range authors who write the reports and provides additional cues for choosing how much weight to give the content of the report.

* * * * *

Unfortunately, the level of care our review crew strives for makes it difficult for us to keep up with the number of incoming reports—currently a steady 25 per day—so we are constantly falling behind. Early in 2002, Sophie lead a charge to clear out pending reports more than a year old, and succeeded. But even weeks of nothing but

“I’ve been called a masochist for reading reports as avidly as I do. I’ve been fascinated with reading and hearing others’ experiences since I was a teen.”
— Scruff

experience reviewing only caught us up to last year’s submissions. There are thousands of reports which have never been read. When people inquire why their report hasn’t been posted to the site, we sheepishly have to respond that we are doing the best we can to work through the submitted reports, but that the project is critically understaffed and underfunded.

The solution to the problem may seem to be simple: finding more people to do the reviewing work. But people who volunteer to review reports often imagine the process to be much more fun than it is. Unfortunately this leads to most volunteers quitting before they begin. Even with a

rigorous application process to weed out those who aren’t serious, along with a request that people commit to reviewing at least 40 reports before giving up, less than half who agree actually complete 40 reports. Since it takes more than an hour to train someone in on the interface and then another few hours of oversight by a second-tier reviewer, finding committed reviewers can be a burden on the busiest of the crew.

The Future

The primary problem with our current reviewing system seems to be the period of time it takes to train new reviewers, combined with a difficult and somewhat tiresome process that loses the attention of casual volunteers.

A fourth generation system, being designed to help resolve some of these problems, includes a triage system for incoming reports that will incorporate a significantly simpler interface for use by casual volunteers. This will be used as a first stage to pre-sort and provide basic categorization for incoming reports, which will then move on to full review by the crew.

* * * * *

Through the work of a few dedicated reviewers, the Experience Vaults have grown into a valuable public archive. Scruff has been an amazing reviewer and has processed more than 2800 reports. Sophie has reviewed over 1700 reports in the last year and MorningGlorySeed has reviewed 450. Other long-term review crew include, in order of number of reports reviewed, Tacovan, Erica, Shell, Catfish, Desox, and Scotto. It is only through the sustained efforts of these committed individuals that the project is able to thrive.

We cannot express enough our appreciation to those visitors who have taken the time to write and submit quality reports and to those reviewers who have tromped through the seemingly endless quagmire of human folly, searching to unearth gems of insight, clarity or error, to be added to the public record. ●

MEME Cultivation

Describe *Your* Experience, Not Mine

Although the general rule for editing experience reports is to change as little as possible of the author’s language, one of the primary changes reviewers are encouraged to make is to modify 2nd-person and “didactic” language. Although this does change the voice of the author, we feel strongly that there is value both in encouraging people to think and write in terms of their own experience, and in not telling others what to think, feel or do. The Experience Vaults are intended for descriptions of experiences, not for broad treatises on the use of psychoactives.

The first part of the policy is to adjust instances of 2nd-person language where the pronoun “you” is used. An example would be changing “Mescaline gives you body tingles” to “Mescaline gives *me* body tingles”.

While there are certainly phrases and uses of “you” that are acceptable—and a reviewer will leave such sentences intact if they’re not directly about personal experience or are crafted with skill and intention—projecting one’s personal experiences onto everyone else in the world is a common error that Erowid is keen to discourage.

The second part of this policy is the removal of overly didactic (lecturing) text. Some authors fill their reports with broad conclusions about how others should act based on their own experiences, experiences which may not even be described in the report. When an author uses didactic language like, “first time users should always...” or “remember to always...”, it’s time to edit the text to reflect that person’s unique experience rather than their assumptions about what others should experience.

We work to make sure we don’t remove the personal lessons or insights that an author is trying to impart, but instead rephrase them as exactly that—the insights of an individual.

Experience Vault Statistics	
Total Reports Submitted	17,396
Submitted Each Day	25
Total Reports Reviewed	10,719
Published	4,527
Declined (1st pass)	1,782
Declined (permanent)	4,290
On Hold	120
Total Awaiting Review	6,797

Emergency Scheduling

2C-T-7

On September 20, 2002, the DEA placed 2C-T-7 into Schedule I by emergency order. 2C-T-7 is now illegal to buy, sell, or possess in the United States without a DEA license.

Two months earlier, on July 19th, they published, in the Federal Register, their *intent* to emergency schedule 2C-T-7. Once the DEA declared this intent, there was a mandatory 30 day comment period during which the public was given the opportunity to provide comment or feedback on the proposed scheduling. The fact that the DEA proceeded with the scheduling suggests no serious objections were filed.

In describing their decision to place 2C-T-7 into Schedule I, the DEA cited evidence from "Pikal" (sic) and "the internet" that 2C-T-7 has effects similar to 2C-B (a Schedule I substance). They report a wide variety of "evidence of abuse", including websites and internet forums, availability through online companies, illegality in other countries (Sweden, Germany), and seizures of 2C-T-7 in two states (Texas & Wisconsin). In addition, they mention the three 2C-T-7 related deaths that have previously been mentioned on Erowid.

Along with 2C-T-7, the DEA also emergency scheduled two relatively obscure piperazines: BZP and TFMPP. While the popularity of these two chemicals is quite low, especially when compared to other Schedule I drugs, it appears that justification for their emergency placement in Schedule I comes in part from their repeated appearance in ecstasy tablets.

The emergency scheduling of these three substances will last up to one year with the option to extend by six months at the end of that year. During that time, the status of these substances is functionally equivalent to that of full Schedule I. During the period of emergency scheduling, the DEA must gather enough scientific evidence to be able to justify "permanent" scheduling. In the case of a substance like 2C-T-7, this means they will contract with researchers to provide them with evidence that 2C-T-7 is similar enough to another Schedule I drug to claim it is highly abusable and has no approved medical use.

One way to obtain this "proof" is to use rat discrimination studies. In these studies, rats are trained to discriminate a psychoactive drug from saline (salt water). They are trained to press one bar when they are given, for example, 2C-B and to press a different bar when they are given saline. After the rats are reliably trained to do this, the 2C-B is then replaced with the substance in question, in this case 2C-T-7. If the rats reliably press the 2C-B bar when they are given 2C-T-7, the new substance is determined to "act similarly to 2C-B". While rat discrimination can be a very useful investigative screening technique for new compounds, it is an ill-founded misappropriation of science to use it to support such politicized definitions. Experts in rat discrimination, however, argue that these types of discrimination studies are valid ways to compare drugs.



If, during the emergency scheduling period, the DEA is unable to show that 2C-T-7 is highly abusable", the substance would revert to an unscheduled status.

There is effectively no chance this could happen and we are unaware of any substance which has been emergency scheduled that did not subsequently become "permanently" scheduled.

When the DEA is ready to place these substances formally into Schedule I (within the next 12-18 months), the FDA must write an Eight Factor Analysis backed by scientific evidence recommending whether or not the drug should be scheduled. If the DEA were to disagree with the FDA's analysis, it is unclear whether the DEA could override the FDA's recommendation.

However, at least in this case, the FDA is quite likely to find that 2C-T-7, BZP, and TFMPP should all be placed in Schedule I.

Read the DEA's scheduling notices at: Erowid.org/extracts/v2/2ct7_law.shtml ●

A substance is placed in Schedule I if it is found, by the DEA, to have:

- ◆ No currently accepted medical use in treatment in the U.S.
- ◆ A lack of accepted safety for use of the drug under medical supervision.
- ◆ A high potential for abuse.

Once a substance is placed in Schedule I, it becomes:

- ◆ Illegal to possess without a DEA license.
- ◆ Unable to be prescribed for human use, even by a licensed physician.
- ◆ Much more difficult to research.

THE QUEST

ACQUISITION TIPS FROM THE WORLD OF MYCOLOGY

BY FIRE EROWID

As most amateur mycologists will tell you, mushroom hunting can be a fun, rewarding, and potentially lucrative activity. Whether hunting for photogenic, edible, or psychedelic mushrooms, the process of learning to identify and find the mushroom of your choice takes time and patience.

Guidelines for safe mushroom hunting have been developed and published by many mycology groups. While we were staffing a table at one of the recent San Francisco Mushroom Fairs—answering questions for people about the history of psychoactive mushroom use—it occurred to me that the process of hunting wild mushrooms shares many similarities with searching for psychoactive plants and chemicals in the underground market. Perhaps the well-developed guidelines for mycology contain a lesson or two that would be useful in this context. They may also provide some insight into the way people naturally search on the street.

◆ **If you aren't sure, don't eat it.** This is the first and last point in mushroom hunting and should be for psychoactive hunting as well. Don't let desire, desperation, or fear of missing an opportunity lower your standards of identification. Anything that *almost* matches what you're looking for could very well be something else. When first starting out, it's hard to know what small variations matter and which ones are normal variations of the target. If you're not sure it should be pink...don't eat it.

◆ **Know what you're looking for and how to identify it.**

Do your homework ahead of time. Learn the formal name and the common names. Learn as much as possible about the different forms it can come in. Does it have an identifiable taste, smell, or look?

◆ **Go with an expert you trust.** Have them show you how and where to find what you're looking for. Ask them for tips and common errors to avoid. It is extremely important that the expert knows what they're talking about. There's no substitute for

having your first few identifications be confirmed by someone with more than a few years of experience in the field. Don't let your friends convince you they know what they're talking about if they don't. Double-check their knowledge.

◆ **If it's your first time, eat only a small amount.**

If the mushroom you picked turns out to be the wrong one, or the ecstasy turns out to be PMA, you'll run far fewer risks and be happier in the long run if you do a test with a small quantity first.

◆ **Learn what the dangerous look-a-likes are.**

One of the first questions that should jump to mind when picking an edible mushroom is "What looks like this that is poisonous?" Find out what the worst-case misidentification is for the substance you're looking for.

◆ **Never mix two species you haven't tried separately before.**

There's enough risk involved in eating a

single new mushroom or substance. If you have an unexpected negative reaction to what you ingest, it is much harder to determine the cause if there are several variables with which you have little familiarity.

◆ **Save some of what you ingest.**

If someone experiences a bad reaction to a mushroom or a chemical, it can be useful to have a sample of the material to analyze or re-identify later.

There are old mushroom hunters and there are bold mushroom hunters, but there are no old bold mushroom hunters.

— An Old Mycophile Saying

◆ **Take careful note of the source of good and bad material (location, habitat, or individual/company).**

Good sources are valuable, bad sources are best avoided. Remember which sources or contexts yield bad material and try different avenues when next on the hunt. ●

On September 19th, 2002, Bob Wallace died at his home in San Rafael California. Bob was a very good friend of Fire and mine and his Promind Foundation was responsible for nearly half of Erowid's funding over the last two years.

Bob was an avid Burning Man participant and we often spent time together discussing and planning absurd contraptions, vehicles, flame throwers, buildings, and costumes to bring to the desert.

In 1996, Bob and Megan started Mind Books, a bookstore offering publications about mind expanding plants and compounds.

He and his wife Megan contributed financial support to many projects in the Psychedelic community, including DanceSafe, EcstasyData.org, the Heffter Foundation, MAPS, and the Black Rock Arts Foundation.

It was through his encouragement and financial support that we decided to work towards making Erowid our full time work. He sprung his first donation on us completely unexpectedly. I am glad we were able to keep our good friendship very much going despite adding the (potential) complexities of financial relationships.

There is much I want to say about him, which mostly comes from that sense of emptiness where my expectations of being able to talk, play, plan, and work with him in the future used to be.

He was a quirky, intelligent, curious, manic-ly energetic, hardworking, unique, and sometimes exasperating fellow, and we loved him. Into the collective, fertile void we all return.

Thanks for your part in the journey, Bob.

Earth (& Fire)

Along with the daily maintenance and upkeep of the site, we are always working on a number of interesting projects. Here is a list of the largest of these projects. Erowid is seeking targeted donations to support this work.

EcstasyData.org (<http://www.ecstasydata.org/>)

In the first year of our managing the EcstasyData project, we have processed 331 tablets. In June of this year, we installed a new digital camera at the testing lab so that the photos would be sharper and higher resolution. This has made a huge difference in photo quality. In February, we added a summary feature to the site which gives cumulative totals and percentages for the ecstasy tests in our database. See <http://www.ecstasydata.org/datastats.php>. We received word that the current grant for the project is the last we will receive from the Promind Foundation, and we are now seeking other foundations or individuals who would like to help support this important project. Starting this winter, until we find more funding, we'll cut back on the number of pills tested by implementing a co-pay requirement for those who submit tablets for testing.

EcstasyData Statistics			
Total Results: 985		Daily Visitors: 1,500	
2002	218	MDMA Only	431 (43.8%)
2001	332	MDMA + Other	112 (11.4%)
2000	333	Other Chemical	369 (37.5%)
1999	69	Nothing	73 (7.4%)

Families & Psychoactives

We are currently seeking individuals who would like to be interviewed about their experiences involving cross-generational relationships where teaching about psychoactives was explicit. For obvious reasons, we suggest people be discreet in any online communications about this topic. Queries or suggestions should be sent to families@erowid.org.

Hofmann Article Database

Working with MAPS and the Albert Hofmann Foundation, we are finishing the first release of this online archive, which should be publicly available in September 2002. See the article on page 12 of this issue for more information.

Quotes Database & Glossary

One of our newest crew members, Datura, has been doing some programming and helping to clean up some of the infrastructure for Erowid 3.0. As a way to learn some of the Erowid administrative systems, his first project was to create a quotes database—a searchable and sortable collection of quotations on topics such as life, freedom, art, culture, and psychoactive. After some final cleanup, this is expected to launch in October 2002. His next project is to create a dynamic version of the Erowid Glossary. The new glossary should be done before the end of the year.

Visionary Art Vaults, by Curator CJ Barnaby

The Art Vaults have boomed over the last year with many well known and little known artists submitting psychedelic and visionary works. It has been a treat each week to see the works coming in and to see what different people think “Visionary Art” means. Many “emerging” artists have appeared in the submissions and the potential of these artists is astounding. From my point of view, there is a galaxy of infinitely beautiful art out there that can and does capture the minds of psychonauts and art aesthetists alike and I'm glad so many are submitting their works to Erowid.

The main challenge over the past year has been choosing the art. Some artists are just on the edge of discovering their potential and I have trouble deciding whether to place them in the Emerging Artist area or in the main Arts Vault. The final decision for these works usually rests with their description of how they came to the creation of the art. For example, if an artist writes something like, “I just got Photoshop and I played with some of the new filters”, or “I did this because I was bored”, they may be just beginning their development as an artist and would either be considered an “emerging” artist or asked to resubmit more of their work later.

If they write “After years of self experimentation, I am discovering a way to express my explorations into the self through my art”, their works are clear expressions of this, and they have some visionary or psychedelic quality, they would most certainly go into the main Visionary Art Vault.

I encourage everyone who has made art influenced by visionary experience or psychedelics to submit their work for potential inclusion in the Vaults. Show your work so that others can appreciate the amount of beauty that this world and its people have to offer.

Site Statistics			
Current			
Content Pages:	15,021	Daily Visitors:	21,282
Archived Images:	3,564	Daily Page Hits:	274,681
Current Members:	479	Daily File Hits:	1,137,576
	Avg Daily File Hits	Avg Daily Page Hits	Avg Daily Visitors
Aug 2002	1,070,560	258,387	20,151
Jul 2002	1,103,957	264,014	20,497
Jun 2002	1,057,833	255,649	20,859
May 2002	1,290,026	293,354	25,567
Apr 2002	1,318,293	300,700	26,283
Mar 2002	1,328,896	288,382	25,426
Feb 2002	1,174,365	284,487	24,763
Jan 2002	1,197,468	262,454	23,023
Dec 2001	966,049	216,702	19,685
Nov 2001	814,489	239,295	21,800
2001	798,400	207,427	17,300
2000	462,000	126,000	12,000
1999	135,800	37,000	4,100

VERBATIM

“If a man wishes to rid himself of a feeling of unbearable oppression, he may have to take to Hashish.”

— Friedrich Nietzsche, (1844-1900)
Ecce Homo

“A child becomes an adult when he realizes that he has a right not only to be right but also to be wrong.”

— Thomas Szasz (b. 1920), U.S. psychiatrist. “Childhood,” *The Second Sin* (1973)

“Those who want the government to regulate matters of the mind and spirit are like men who are so afraid of being murdered that they commit suicide.”

— Harry Truman (1884-1972)

“What progress we are making. In the Middle Ages they would have burned me. Now they are content with burning my books.”

— Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

“A moment’s insight is sometimes worth a life’s experience.”

— Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841 -1935)

“We should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality.”

— Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

“They tell us that plants are not like man immortal, but are perishable—soul-less. I think that is something that we know exactly nothing about.”

— John Muir (1838-1914),
Personal Journal, 1867

“Only those who attempt the absurd will achieve the impossible.”

— M.C. Escher (1898-1972)

“The most extraordinary thing about a really good teacher is that he or she transcends accepted educational methods.”

— Margaret Mead (1901-1978)

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

— John Dewey (1859-1952)

“All education springs from some image of the future. If the image of the future held by a society is grossly inaccurate, its education system will betray its youth.”

— Alvin Toffler (b. 1928)

Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est

[Knowledge itself is power.]

— Francis Bacon
(1561-1625)

“A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.”

— Unknown

“I haven’t failed, I’ve found 10,000 ways that don’t work.”

— Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

“If you don’t like what you’re doing, you can always pick up your needle and move to another groove.”

— Timothy Leary (1920-1996)

“Did you ever hear anyone say ‘that work had better be banned because I might read it and it might be very damaging to me’?”

— Joseph Henry Jackson,
American Journalist, 1894-1946

“Life may have no meaning. Or even worse, it may have a meaning of which I disapprove.”

— Ashleigh Brilliant (b. 1933)

“All censorships exist to prevent anyone from challenging current conceptions and existing institutions. All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions, and executed by supplanting existing institutions. Consequently the first condition of progress is the removal of censorships. There is the whole case against censorship in a nutshell.”

— George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

“Books won’t stay banned. They won’t burn. Ideas won’t go to jail. In the long run of history the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas.”

— A. Whitney Griswold (1906-1963)

“Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.”

— George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

“He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.”

— Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

“Formerly, when religion was strong and science weak, men mistook magic for medicine, now, when science is strong and religion weak, men mistake medicine for magic.”

— Thomas Szasz (b. 1920)

“If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.”

— Anatole France (1844-1924)