

Mr. Charles Swanson
Encyclopaedia Britannica
425 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Mr. Swanson:

Now that you have had some time to consider our report, I would like to offer some thoughts as to the particular role I might play in regard to future Britannica efforts in electronic publishing. *any* *about* *as they stand,*

If you should decide to adopt any of our proposals, I would like very much to continue in the role of consultant and help to get the project (or projects) started. Additionally, if you should decide to go ahead with any of the individual topic programs, I would like to have the opportunity to actually produce some of the programs. In this case I would join with an established production company to undertake the actual production as outlined in the report. *Furthermore,*

If, on the other hand, you like the proposal for the series of individual topic programs, but decide that current market conditions do not warrant the investment, I hope you would consider the following possibility. From my discussions with various people over the past several months, I believe I would be able to find the financing and creative talent necessary to produce a number of the programs in Britannica's name, without any investment on EB's part. Such an arrangement could take the form of a joint venture between EB and Company A, where Britannica's principal contribution would be its name, or a licensing agreement where Company A pays Britannica a royalty.

While producing the programs in this way would have the longterm disadvantage of smaller profits for Britannica from the programs, there would be no financial risk to EB. Also, the Britannica name would be established in the videodisc/electronic media marketplace, which is one of the principal goals of this series of programs in the first place.

I don't know whether EB has ever allowed another company to produce a product in the Britannica name, but I think it would certainly be possible to build sufficient safeguards into the structure of an agreement that would protect Britannica's image and reputation. At the least, EB would have the right both to approve the final product before publication and to pass on the distribution and promotion plans. *sh*

As for the two encyclopaedia projects, Compton's and the Intelligent Encyclopaedia, while I realize that it can take months or even years to decide on projects of this magnitude, I would urge you to take advantage of any opportunity to extend EB's understanding of how to carry out such work in the future. Specifically, I strongly recommend that EB accept the tentative

Sony-MIT offer to perform a major experiment on the presentation of text on videodisc using Britannica materials. An experiment which employed the MIT video typography and combined MIT and Sony expertise in this area would have important bearing on any future Britannica projects in the electronic publishing market. (A copy of my October 24th letter to Mr. Van Doren, outlining the Sony-MIT offer, is enclosed.)

I look forward to hearing your assessment of the report.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Stein