Frequently Asked Questions

This file lists questions that have been asked by the users and which are mainly related to the structure, the use, and the general policy of the Mathematical Handbook.

Question 1. Why is this book not available in libraries?

Answer. The larger part of this Mathematical Handbook is in the form of digital files, that is in software form. Software is not available to the public in free libraries, because that would diminish its sales and eventually close down its production. For this reason the Mathematical Handbook is sold only to individual users, while at the same time a lot of effort has been made to keep its price as low as possible. Thus, we can make it available as widely as possible and continue to improve its quality and content.

Question 2. Why is this book not available in bookstores?

Answer. The main reason is that a book available in bookstores includes a 30%-50% in its price for the bookseller. Hence, if the Mathematical Handbook were sold through a bookstore, the cost for the user would be about 70 euros instead of 49 euros. Another reason is that a part is in digital form, offered to the user through Internet.

Question 3. Why was the book not made "larger" as other books of similar contents?

Answer. We believe that a book of this type must be small to be easily used. A book that occupies a lot of space on our desk and has a thousand pages is not easily used since the user spends his time searching. On the other hand, if the user wants to find more information on a particular entry, he is given the ability to find additional material in Part C and Part D.

Question 4. What is the use of Part B? Wouldn't it be better to have more pages in Part A instead of having Part B?

Answer. Part B is a summary of Part A with emphasis on the more elementary contents of Part A. It can be used as a "home copy" of Part A or can be given to someone with elementary needs. It is simpler, with no icons and connections to additional material. It is like a "pocket handbook". Its usefulness will become more evident when more "Alive Books" are published.

Question 5. Today, if we want to find something (in Mathematics or in a broader sense), we can use very fast the Internet or a good software. Why should we go to a book?

Answer. Books and Internet (or mathematical software) are not substitutes of each other and pages of a site cannot replace the pages of a book and vice versa. A good scientific book is a highly organized and easily read collection of essential information. Information from Internet sites is in most cases not adequately reliable and usually of encyclopedic nature. There are very few mathematical sites and software packages that are acceptable as scientifically reliable sources of information. But even these should not be compared with a good book. They are essentially different sources of information. If we want to build our knowledge structure, it is preferable to lay the foundations on a solid ground and then to spread our wings to fly. So, learn to use this handbook and then look for information elsewere.