

# ***The Scientist* To Launch LabConsumer Section Featuring Product Reviews And Information**

By Eugene Garfield  
*The Scientist* 11[13]:8, June 23, 1997

When *The Scientist* was launched more than a decade ago, we wanted the right recipe for our publication. We discussed features that readers felt would be useful and, more significantly, could not be found elsewhere. We decided to focus on the career concerns of life sciences professionals. Our choice of direction has proved to be of value to working researchers; readers have enthusiastically communicated their satisfaction through letters and comments on our Web site.

To enhance our editorial offerings, we began our Tools & Technology section several years ago with the intent of exploring the connection between researchers and their instrumentation, addressing the interrelated needs of readers and of manufacturers of lab equipment and supplies. The discussion of products by category was designed to provide in-depth information about available choices to users and potential users of scientific instruments.

While our Tools & Technology stories have been well-received by readers, a careful evaluation indicated that we have an opportunity to provide even more helpful data to users of scientific ware. By studying the success of consumer-type periodicals in other industries, we determined that a more thorough approach to providing product information would better serve the interests of our readers.

with the July 21, 1997, issue of *The Scientist*, we are introducing *LabConsumer*. This distinctive section will provide the type of comparative analysis found in magazines like Consumer Reports, Mac World, and PC Computing. Our new Associate Publisher, Scott Shoemaker, formerly of BioConsumer Review, will direct this new section. A separate editorial staff has been established to manage this new section of *The Scientist*. They will operate from our West Coast office at 26242 Dimension Dr., Suite 220, Lake Forest, Calif. 92630; (714) 768-3488; E-mail: labcon@id4net.com. The staff will maintain liaison with manufacturers and suppliers as well as independent authors of the articles to be found in *LabConsumer*.

*LabConsumer* is written for scientists who use or direct the purchase of laboratory products. The primary objective of this new section is the creation of a communication platform between purveyors of laboratory goods and the intended users of these goods—readers of *The Scientist*. Finding information about available products used in scientific applications is often difficult and tedious, and the effort is not always the best use of time in a demanding work environment. Yet the right apparatus, the appropriate kit, or the best value on consumables can affect the outcome of a research project as well as lab budgets. By

knowing what resources are available as well as the technical specifications and application strengths of each product, scientists are better equipped to choose the tools best suited for their lab. On the other side of the equation are the numerous manufacturers attempting to get researchers' attention with what can sometimes seem like a mountain of promotional literature. LabConsumer has been designed to cut to the chase by systematically and thoroughly discussing these products. As a publication within a publication, LabConsumer is poised to bring together users of scientific products and their manufacturers.

What exactly is on the menu? For starters, Tools & Technology is here to stay, but with a slightly different focus. Now as a feature within LabConsumer, Tools & Technology will contain reviews of new and unique products. Not merely rehashed press releases, this product news section will be written by knowledgeable individuals who will offer their opinions, often after taking products out for a test drive. We'll sample the goods for you so you don't have to wait for someone down the hall to do the sampling.

The main portion of LabConsumer contains two features: Product Profiles and Product Reviews. Profiles will describe the features and benefits of a specific segment of products large and small, from pipette tips to automated DNA sequencers and everything in between. Each segment will be thoroughly researched to provide readers with the most complete and accurate listing of available products and the companies that produce them. The section will begin with background information regarding a

specific product segment; then every device in that category will be profiled, company by company. Information will be gathered from available literature and through interviews with each company's product managers to ensure accuracy. A comparative table will be inserted into each article showing the technical features of every product as well as each company's address, phone number, Web site, and E-mail address.

LabConsumer Product Reviews, which are being planned for later issues, will contain many of the same features found in the Product Profiles. These opinionated articles will be written by working scientists-often our own readers-or writers who are technically familiar with the category under discussion. Under pre-established protocols, these reviewers will test products; results will be published along with the typical information found in a profile. Reviewers will discuss the test performance of similar products with occasional recommendations for top-performing equipment. Frequently, surveys will be conducted to tabulate the user responses. Most important, these reviews will include the application strengths of each product. This analysis will render critical information to potential buyers, who will then be equipped to make an informed decision.

The articles in LabConsumer are designed to be of current interest. The biweekly feature also will be retrievable as a reference tool on our Web site (<http://www.the-scientist.com>). It is our intention to take advantage of this digital medium by regularly updating information as changes occur in the industry. The technical information found in our profiles and reviews will be

updated so that with each visit you will find valuable information at your beck and call. We seek your feedback. We look forward to your involvement. The

proof of the pudding lies in the eating. Watch for our July 21 issue and join in the feast!

---

The Scientist 11[13]:8, June 23, 1997