ASIS National Convention and the Information-Conscious Society

April 1, 1970

On October 11-15, the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) will be holding its 33rd National Convention in Philadelphia. I have the honor of serving as the National Chairman. The main theme is "The Information Conscious Society".

I can recall the first time the ASIS met in Philadelphia in 1955. I presented a paper on citation indexes to the Old Testament, a project which, to my knowledge, has never been taken up by anyone. Going back even further, I recall the early days of ASIS when it was called the American Documentation Institute. In those days, membership was limited to organizations; individuals could not join.

Since then, ADI has changed its name and membership policies and has grown into an organization of about 4,000 members. In my opinion, ASIS could be at least double and perhaps triple that size by now if, in spite of rather persistent resistance, it had changed its name much sooner. At that time, however, there were always more immediate, more pressing problems to worry about than a change of name.

In line with this, I once wrote an editorial[1] to suggest that many more members of the scientific community at large would have to become concerned about the field of information science. I predicted a growing number of scientists would have to become involved in the process of handling and distilling the large volumes of information generated by the world's scientists. Even those who did not become directly involved in such activities would have to learn to deal with a whole new variety of information tools.

Today, the continued growth of the literature and the continued merging of old disciplines into new multidisciplinary activities have increased the need for such involvement. Nevertheless, there remains a natural tendency to concentrate upon the more immediate, more specialized problems. Thus, the scientific community still has a long way to go in meeting its responsibility of dealing with its own information problems and with the impact of information sources from other fields. In 1970, this problem grows more critical with the increasing insistence from Congress and, ultimately, from the taxpayer, on seeing not only the results from research they support, but also evidence for the impact of those research results on society's long-term problems.

As evidenced by the past delay in changing its name, ASIS is no exception to this tendency to look more closely at immediate problems rather than those of the future. Therefore, as National Chairman, I am making every effort to assure that the 1970 meeting

will reflect broad participation, especially by those outside the normal communication channels of ASIS.

To this end, I have invited scientists from all fields to consider presenting a paper at the ASIS convention. Of course, individual information science specialists will have an opportunity to present papers, but the main conference papers will, hopefully, come from other members of the scientific community. I have done this in the firm belief that such interaction between information scientists and the rest of the scientific community will be beneficial to everyone, including the increasingly information-conscious public.

If you are interested in presenting a paper at the ASIS National Convention please contact:

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(1) E. Garfield, "Who Are the Information Scientists?" CC®/*Chemical, Pharmaco-Medical & Life Sciences* 5(32), p. 5