## """""current comments"

## SCI® and ASCA® Promote International Contacts.

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Any information system like Current Contents®, which covers journals from all over the world, fosters the international contact inherent to scientific communication. However, the Science Citation Index and Automatic Subject Citation Alert systems play a special role in promoting contacts between scientists. When one author cites or quotes the work of another he often does so without informing the other author. The cited author has a legitimate interest in knowing that his work has in some way stimulated or contributed to the work of a colleague elsewhere. Most of us have experienced that special feeling of surprise and pleasure when an unexpected reference to our work is seen in some journal that is not normally on our reading menu.

Recently I began a lively correspondence with a Soviet scientist who is actively involved in the "science of science" and uses the SCI for sociometric and other purposes. I might never had made this contact were it not for my ASCA report, through which I learned that he had cited one of my

papers and used the SCI for certain bibliometric studies. (1) I could cite dozens of similar examples.

The increasing tendency of scientists to cite the work of colleagues outside of their own circle of friends, the so-called invisible colleges, is clearly evident. Increasingly, the interdisciplinary nature of research improves the likelihood that unexpected citations will occur in journals we don't normally peruse. There is no simpler method for learning about these than ISI<sup>®</sup>'s ASCA service or the regular use of the SCI in your library.

Lest anyone accuse you of feeding your vanity, keep in mind that you may not always like what you read, but, even if you do, why shouldn't scientists take pride in providing useful stimulation to their colleagues at home and abroad.

If you are not yet using ASCA or SCI to increase your international contacts, may I suggest you request a detailed brochure available from ISI in Philadelphia or the addresses abroad shown elsewhere in this issue.

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