

Does ISI[®]'s International Directory of R&D Authors and Organizations Perpetrate Alphabetic Discrimination?

Some readers of Current Contents® may not know that the names and addresses which appear in the Author Index and Address Directory each week are cumulated each year in ISI's International Directory of Research and Development Scientists (IDR&DS[®]). The 1971 volume will contain about twice the number of names and addresses as previous volumes. We have expanded coverage to include all CC [®] editions published in 1970. IDR&DS now is unquestionably the largest and most up-to-date directory of its kind and covers people and organizations in almost every branch of knowledge, but especially science and technology.

The first-named authors of those articles processed for CC are included in the IDR&DS. Secondary authors sometimes believe they are the victim of a subtle but vicious form of tyranny which results in the second author syndrome. This is frequently associated with alphabetic arrangements of authors' names. According to Trevor Weston¹, the "alphabetic disorder" is a taxogenous neurosis suffered by those whose names begin with the later letters of the alphabet. As also discussed facetiously in the Journal of the American Medical Association² and refuted in Psychological Reports³, the alphabetic neurosis is said to be the result-with ulcerous and hyperpietic manifestations--of years of anxiety and suspense induced by finding oneself waitJanuary 6, 1971

ing at the ends of alphabetically arranged queues, classrooms, telephone books, etc.

However, a variety of factors, including the wide coverage of the various editions of *Current Contents*, overcomes this problem in the *IDR&DS*. Most scientists who are first authors in one paper later cede that prominence to coworkers. This is seen in almost every issue of *CC*. Thus, *IDR&DS* does indeed include the names of most publishing scientists and scholars.

Recently an author⁴ complained of the obscurity he anticipated because of a policy followed by the *Journal of Physiology* in listing authors alphabetically. As a matter of fact his name has appeared in every edition of the *IDR&DS*--still among the tail-end W's alas, but nevertheless *there*!

The IDR&DS is of course, also invaluable as a geographic directory of scientists and scholars. (There are occasional odd visitors: the 1971 edition will include one S.T. Agnew of Washington, D.C.) But it is also an extraordinary source of information on groups of scientists working in various specialties, at various organizations and in various parts of the world. The unusual value of the Geographic and Organizational Sections was recently illustrated by Derek deSolla Price of Yale University. He obtained some remarkably precise measures of scientific research around the globe by using statistics ISI provided from the computer tapes which produce the $IDR\&DS.^5$ A somewhat absurd editorial on Price's work appeared in *Nature*⁶ to which he later replied.⁷

To call each annual volume of *IDR&DS* an annual "edition" is misleading. Each volume is an independent reference tool. A later "edition" does not update an earlier one. For 1967, 1968 and 1969 each volume covered authors who published during those calendar years. For these reasons, subscribers would do well to consider acquiring those earlier volumes since a large number of authors can be found who may never publish again, publish in journals not covered by CC, or perchance are the victim of alphabetic discrimination.

This year we are changing our policy. The 1971 "edition" will cover the calendar year 1970. Another important change is the typographical format. The 1971 *IDR&DS* will be produced by the Fototronic--a computer activated photocomposing machine. Not only is it more legible but permits us to include much more information on each page. It is incredible that in a volume of approximately 1100 pages, there will be an estimated 280,000 names.

- 1. Weston, T. "The Alphabetic Disorder". Medical News No. 168, 5(Dec. 24, 1965).
- 2. "In Alphabetic Disorder". JAMA 196(12), 1082 (June 20, 1965).
- 3. Shupe, D.R. "Alphabetical Neurosis and Longevity". Pyschological Reports 22, 630 (1968).
- 4. Weale, R.A. "Unfair to W's". Nature 226, 195 (April 11, 1970).
- 5. Price, D.J.D. "Measuring the Size of Science". Proc. Israel Acad. Sci. & Human. 4(6), 98-114 (1969). See also New Scientist 45(690), 391 (Feb. 26, 1970).
- 6. "Can Science Afford Scientists?" Nature 226(5240), 10 (April 4, 1970).
- 7. Price, D.J.D. Nature 226(5249), 985 (June 6, 1970).