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The New Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)
Will Add a New Dimension to Research
on Man and Society

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Recently, Queens College, City University of New York, held a conference on "Access to Knowledge and Information in the Social Sciences and Humanities." On that occasion, ISI announced the forthcoming publication of our new Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI).1 Most of the participants in the conference expressed confidence that the new SSCI will prove to be indispensable to research in the coming decade. The stresses which society and the individual suffer with a daily and increasing frustration and violence make plain that we must finally pay more than lip service to Pope's easily remembered but generally unheeded aphorism that "the proper study of mankind is man." That aphorism will be epitomized in the SSCI.

The application of citation indexing, and its potential effectiveness in behavioral science research was discussed some time ago.² Most Current Contents readers know that the Science Citation Index can be found in most major U.S. libraries and research centers, and in a large number of them abroad as well. There is an abundant literature on its effectiveness in information retrieval, and a growing literature on its use in the evaluation of institutions and research and in the study of the sociology and history of science.

It is somewhat ironical that the SSCI should have been produced after the SCI®, because most social scientists seem to grasp the concept of citation indexing almost intuitively. Perhaps this is because they have not been predisposed to traditional abstract and index publications, as were chemists, prior to the publication of the SCI. Or perhaps the association of individuals with theories and other subject matter is much more pronounced in the "soft" sciences. The explanation may, on the other hand, be much less subtle: acceptability of the concept of citation indexing among social scientists may be due simply to the absolutely unstandardized nomenclature of the field, and the consequent difficulties it presents in the use of traditional methods of information handling.

From the outset, the Social Sciences Citation Index will be intimately related to Current Contents/Behavioral, Social and Educational Sciences. Most of the journals covered by CC */BS&ES, along with others, will be covered by the SSCI. In addition, the new list of journals will be covered by our ASCA (Automatic Subject Citation Alert) system for selective dissemination of information—a significant bonus. Aside from coverage of more than 50,000 source articles and about 1,000,000 citations per year, the SSCI will include, in addition to its Source Index

and Citation Index, a Permuterm [®] Subject Index. ⁴ The Permuterm Subject Index, by correlating all possible word-pairs from source journal article titles, will be a lexicographer's paradise.

We are new sending to a large sample of social scientists a proposed list of journals. This tentative list has been developed with the advice of competent specialists, but also from analyses of citations appearing in core social-sciences journals already covered in the Science Citation Index. We have also drawn upon several other important citation studies. 5-9 Using the SCI data base, we have determined the most frequently cited journals.10 By an iterative procedure of examining the most cited and citing journals, we believe we have an objective view of the literature actually used by scholars in various areas of the social sciences.

A tentative list of the fields to be covered in SSCI includes:

--anthropology, linguistics, geography

-law, forensic science, criminology, penology

--sociology, social issues, ethnology, demography

-labor, management, personnel, industrial relations

-library and information sciences
 -economics, business, finance, statistics

--history, philosophy, humanities
--public health, hygiene, rehabilitation and nursing

-social and preventive medicine
 -political science, public administration, international affairs

--psychology, behavioral sciences, orthopsychiatry, mental health --educational research, communication

At the outset, coverage of the SSCI will concentrate on journal literature. As dictated in time by our continuing citation studies, by the advice of our editorial advisory boards, and by suggestions from subscribers, we plan to extend coverage to other types of source material: research monographs, reports, theses, books, etc. A special feature of SSCI coverage will be a selective coverage of multidisciplinary journals and general periodicals like Science, Nature, Saturday Review, New York Times Magazine, etc. Our citation studies have already shown that such periodicals are very frequently cited by social science journals. Complete coverage would produce a high noise content for social scientists. However, as distinct from source (citing) journal material, all citations regardless of type or age of the cited material, will be included.

I have always felt that the state of an art, and certainly the technical precision of a science, can be roughly correlated with the effectiveness of its information processing. The one facilitates the other. We hope that the SSCI will contribute something to a real beginning of mankind's study of man, and thereby help find solutions to the many problems plaguing man and society.

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