## """"""current comments"

How WSI Can Save You and Yours Some Searching Time!

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When we first announced the Weekly Subject Index to Current Contents, 1.2 we expected that most users would use the index themselves. Since our surveys indicated that few readers delegate scanning CC to assistants or paramedical personnel, 3 it was reasonable to assume that the same would apply to the index. Here is another instance of the unreliability of market research extrapolations. What people tell you before a product or service is launched can be very different from what they actually do with it afterwards.

Recently some readers have informed me that they have applied experience in profile compilation for ASCA® to CC's WSI. Using a profile of relevant search terms, one man's secretary looks each term up in WSI even before he sees CC. She dutifully marks each title in CC, circling the key terms. When her boss scans the entire issue he can be sure these will be highlighted. At this time, he then adds his own search terms, if necessary, and returns the CC to his secretary. She then sends for reprints, OATS®, inter-library loans, or photocopies the articles in the library, depending upon the urgency of his interest.

In one case, the secretary clips each citation. It is posted alphabetically by search terms. Each reprint is also assigned a serial number and filed by

that. Others file reprints alphabetically by author or institution.

This leads to my main proposition. In many instances, CC has become the tail of a very big dog. Probably the average reader's investment in his IR system is at least ten times the cost of his CC subscription. The postage for reprint requests alone exceeds the cost of CC.

Photocopies eat up quite a tidy sum. Now we come along and suggest that you spend another buck each week for an index. This should not be treated lightly, because those bucks add up. My role and that of our enlightened marketing department is to remind you to reassess your priorities.

Maybe you should try Dr. David Z. Levine's system.<sup>4</sup> Not all readers have secretaries, but most have assistants or students. I myself would not because I use ASCA already, and it is adequate insurance that I am not missing anything important. I also scan indexes somewhat randomly rather than systematically, so delegating the job would be futile.

Stated in other terms, WSI might be regarded as an inexpensive ASCA system, especially if you have to absorb the cost of a secretary or assistant anyhow. It depends on how fully his or her time

is taken up. However, it was most revealing to learn how many CC readers were interested in *Project REX* as a method of saving secretarial time.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the systematic use described above, WSI does have its value as an interim retro-search tool. Recently, we wanted to locate the original paper on coherin. The New York Times, had just given considerable attention to this new anti-ulcer compound. Unfortunately, our Science Citation Index Permuterm Subject Index cumulation had not yet appeared and WSI was the only solution.

WSI is the only solution to a completely up-to-date search unless you happen to have a SCISEARCH™ online terminal available. In fact, so many readers use it this way that we are now asking them to let us know what they think about a monthly cumulation of our Weekly Subject Index.

For those of you who would like to try WSI, the Marketing people here at ISI® have obligingly coordinated my efforts with theirs by including an offer of a four-week free trial in the current issues of CC/Life Sciences and

CC/Physical and Chemical Sciences. If you are one of those CC readers who has his secretary eyeballing titles for key-words, maybe it's a worthwhile investment just to save some of her scanning time.

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- Harris, R.M. & Garfield, E. Weekly Subject Indexes to Current Contents, a new aid to complement scanning scientific literature. Paper presented at the 1972 Fall Meeting of the American Chemical Society, New York City, August 28-31, 1972.
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- Goodman, I. & Hiatt, R.B. Coherin, a new peptide of the bovine neurohypophysis with activity on gastrointestinal motility. Science 178(4059):419-421, 1972.