Current Contents Search: New Online Version of Current Contents Expands Your Coverage and Retrieval Options

Ever since the advent of online services, readers have asked me when *Current Contents*® (*CC*®) would be available through this new technology. They seemed shocked when I told them that in fact the journals covered in *CC* were included in *SciSearch*®, which I described as long ago as 1972.[1] But apparently a rose by any other name is not sweet enough. After considerable investigation of the many possibilities, we have developed a new product that reflects not just the ISI® perception but also more explicitly what our customers visualized as *Current Contents* online. The product is *Current Contents Search*™.

Current Contents Search, which is now available through the database vendor BRS, offers online access to the information in five *CC* science editions: Life Sciences; Clinical Medicine; Engineering, Technology & Applied Sciences; Agriculture, Biology & Environmental Sciences; and Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences. In addition to presenting the tables of contents for journals covered in these *CC* editions, *Current Contents Search* provides a comprehensive bibliographic record for each article, including complete journal information and author addresses.

In conjunction with this new online database, ISI Software is introducing *Current Contents Connection*™, a microcomputer program developed specifically for use with *Current Contents Search*. As I'll discuss, *Current Contents Connection* has commands and features designed to help you make the most efficient and economical use of the new *Current Contents Search* file. What's more, the software eliminates the need for you to know any of the search commands or protocols of the BRS system.

Current Contents Connection also makes it easy to transfer downloaded data to a word processor or to *Sci-Mate*®, ISI's integrated file-management software system.[2] With the *Sci-Mate Manager*, you can set up and edit your own personal database of reprints, author addresses, customized bibliographies, and other information.

Making *CC* available online has been a long-term goal. In 1984 we asked, "What does *Current Contents Online* mean to you?"[3] At that time, with more and more readers having access to personal computers, many were asking us about an online version of *CC*. Such a service, as I noted, could satisfy readers who wanted "customized" *CC* coverage limited to a few, select journals. For about 20 years, of course, we've offered this kind of service with *ASCA*® (*Automatic Subject Citation Alert*), and more recently with *Custom Contents*®.[4] *ASCA* is a personalized current-awareness service that automatically locates in the journal literature every new item related to a subscriber's interest. *ASCA*, in fact, was the first commercial SDI (selective dissemination of information) service in science. The *Custom Contents* derivative simply modifies the format of the laser-printed weekly reports and delivers them in contents page order.

In 1985 the Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri, developed and evaluated an online version of *CC* as part of the library's Bibliographic Access and Control System (BACS). According to Susan Crawford and colleagues, School of Medicine Library, use of the BACS/*Current Contents* service by professional and technical staff at the medical school was "effective and sustained over time."[5] ISI has

also set up in-house, customized online versions of *CC* for industrial customers, such as IBM.

While researching the possibilities of an online *CC*, we noted that most *CC* readers would use an online version to supplement, rather than replace, their reading and browsing in the printed version. The online version, for example, could be used to expand the use of weekly subject indexes to retrieve articles that had appeared in the last few months. As with *Custom Contents*, it would also give you access to journals that are not in the *CC* edition that you read regularly. However, you can limit your searches to one or more editions.

Current Contents Search indexes every item published in more than 4,500 scientific and technical journals. This gives you access to roughly 9,000 contents pages and over 168,000 articles published in the last three months. (Journals covered exclusively in *CC/Arts & Humanities* and *CC/Social & Behavioral Sciences* are accessible through two other ISI online files—*Social SciSearch®* and *Arts & Humanities Search®*.)

The *Current Contents Search* file is updated each week by adding almost 800 new contents pages and 14,000 articles. As with its printed counterpart, you can browse through the complete set of new contents pages or limit your search to your favorite journals. As you browse, you can "download" all or part of the data for specific items that interest you—titles, author names, affiliations, and reprint addresses. As I've mentioned, the *Sci-Mate* system, with its many options for structuring, sorting, and retrieving data, is the ideal database-management system to use in concert with *Current Contents Search*. However, the records can easily be converted for use with a number of homegrown systems.

With a variety of searching options, *Current Contents Search* will help you track down the information you need—the latest article by a given author or lab, for example, or the most recent paper on a given topic. You can use the database to set up a "term search," which allows you to input information on one or more keywords, authors, journals, and institutions. To give you an idea of how the online system works,

consider the sample searches in the next section.

Using *Current Contents Search*

Once you have logged on to BRS and entered the *Current Contents Search* database (which goes by the abbreviation "CCON"), you can begin your search. Suppose you want to see the contents page for the most recent issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. When you have entered the journal name, the system will tell you how many issues of that journal are available. You might choose to examine the table of contents for the most recent issue. *Current Contents Search* will then display the appropriate contents page. The display tells you which *CC* editions the journal is indexed in and also indicates its "discipline category." The *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, for example, would be "general medicine." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* appears in the "multidisciplinary" category. These discipline categories correspond to those in the printed *CC*.

The listing for each item on the contents page includes title, language, document type ("article," "letter," "editorial," "review," and so on), authors, and page numbers. (For more details and illustrations of a sample search, see the Appendix at the end of this essay.)

Current Contents Search enables you to search by keyword to find articles on a given topic. To find "prolactin" you simply enter that term. If necessary, you can truncate to cover all possible lexical variations. Entering "midwi$" would retrieve papers on midwives or midwifery, but might occasionally also produce a paper on midwinter weather.

Boolean, or combination, searches are standard in *Current Contents Search*. These provide one advantage over the printed indexes in *CC*. A search using the terms "prolactin" and "schizophrenia" will limit the responses to articles involving both terms, if that is what you prefer. While you might want to see everything on prolactin in a weekly scan, you might prefer the combination search over a three-month period.

Current Contents Search will display a complete record of each article retrieved, in-

cluding the *CC* editions in which the article appears. In addition to the source journal and its discipline category, *The Genuine Article*™ number (formerly called *OATS*® number) is provided. You can use this number to order a copy of the document directly from ISI. The complete article title, all authors, and addresses are provided so that you can write for reprints.

With *Current Contents Search* you can combine search terms to locate publications. You might have heard, for example, of a recent paper on newborn babies by an author at the University of Illinois. You can combine the subject term with the institutional name. Once you see the display you may realize that it is by an author named Boyer at the University of Illinois, and not "Bauer" as you had thought. Whether you started your search with the author's name or institution or in combination with one or more keywords, you will find the paper you've been looking for.

Current Contents Connection

Thus far I have described very briefly the options available on *Current Contents Search* as they appear on the BRS system. However, as I mentioned, ISI Software is introducing *Current Contents Connection*, a software package developed specifically for use with *Current Contents Search* and designed to facilitate using the database. For example, with *Current Contents Connection* you can set up search profiles before you go online. You can enter keywords, authors, and journal titles in advance. You can also specify which of the *CC* editions you want to search and which format you'd like—contents pages, for example, or complete bibliographic citations.

As with the *Sci-Mate Searcher*, *Current Contents Connection* does not require that you learn or use the commands on the BRS system. Systems like *Sci-Mate* and *Current Contents Connection* are useful if you have not had extensive training in online retrieval languages. But whether or not you want to work in the BRS native language, *Current Contents Connection* eliminates the log-on procedure required to access the BRS system. Using the menu option, *Current Contents Connection* will automatically log you on to *Current Contents Search*. Once online, you can execute your search profiles automatically. All of this saves time and keeps your connect fees to a minimum.

Current Contents Connection has other features to help you prepare and run your searches. The program, for example, contains a full-screen text editor. When you are preparing a search or reviewing results, on- or offline, you can edit the text with commands that can be set to emulate the basic text-editing commands of WordStar and other word processors, including WordPerfect, MultiMate, and Word.

When you have located articles and would like to obtain a reprint from the author, *Current Contents Connection* will generate reprint-request letters. You simply place the cursor on the part of the display listing the author's address and execute a few keystrokes. *Current Contents Connection* will generate a formatted letter to the author containing the author's name, address, and the article's full title. This letter can be printed out at the end of your online session or modified with a full word processor. You then need only sign it and send it off.

Current Contents Connection can be set to perform SDI searches of the database, meaning that it will automatically perform the same search week after week until it is modified. This ensures that you receive only the most recent information each time you log on. *Current Contents Connection* makes it simple to implement such a search.

Complementary Versions

Online access to *Current Contents* will not eliminate the use of the printed version unless you have extremely narrow interests and choose to ignore the rest of the literature. As I mentioned, our early research indicated that *Current Contents Search* will be used to complement the printed version. Certainly, each version has its own advantages. Whatever the convenience of searching online, there is probably no substitute for the ease and versatility of actually having that *CC* edition in your hands—to browse through, mark up, carry around, and dispose of or save as you please. The printed version also offers a fixed cost—no equipment charges or connect fees to deal with. And

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the printed *CC* gives you the additional editorial content in each issue: these essays, for example, and *ISI Press Digest*, as well as the *Citation Classic®* commentaries.

On the other hand, consider some of the advantages of the online version. With *Current Contents Search*, you have access to journals not covered in the *CC* edition you already receive. You have more flexibility in search strategies and formats to obtain instantly the exact information you are seeking. And most importantly you can easily download the pertinent information for your own use—no need for laborious typing or copying.

The ideal scenario, of course, is to combine the advantages of both versions. Continue to scan the printed *CC* for articles of interest in your field. Use *Current Contents Search* for access to the entire *CC* scientific database. Go online with *Current Contents Connection* software for the most economical and efficient searching of the database. Use *Current Contents Connection* to download information to your PC files and to generate reprint requests.

We are currently working with BRS to provide a "preferential rate" on *Current Contents Search* to individuals who already subscribe to the printed *CC*. Under this arrangement, individual subscribers will get a 50 percent discount on online connect fees with *Current Contents Search*. The same discount will apply for current users of *Sci-Mate* software. We are also offering registered *Sci-Mate* users a one-third discount on *Current Contents Connection* software. So it will be worth your while to put both the printed and the online versions of *CC* to work for you.

Readers often do not realize that ISI does not control the vendors of online services. Dialog, BRS, DataStar, and others must be willing and able to operate these databases. *Current Contents Search* is now up and operating on BRS. In the near future we hope to make the database available through other vendors as well.

* * * * *

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REFERENCES

1. **Garfield E.** ISI's *SciSearch* time-shared system trades time for money—but are you ready for this? *Essays of an information scientist.* Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1977. Vol. 1. p. 366-7. (Reprinted from: *Current Contents* (40):5-6, 4 October 1972.)
2. ------------. The integrated *Sci-Mate Software System.* Part 1. Combining file management, online access, and searching with manuscript editing. *Ibid.*, 1986. Vol. 8. p. 360-7.
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5. **Crawford S, Halbrook B & Igielnik S.** Testing the use of a medical center-wide online current awareness service: BACS/*Current Contents.* (Hurd J M, ed.) *ASIS '86. Proceedings of the 49th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science Vol. 23*, 28 September-2 October 1986, Chicago, IL. Medford, NJ: Learned Information, 1986. p. 56-8.

Appendix: Sample Searches Using *Current Contents Search*

Contents Page Search

Once you have entered the journal name (in this case the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, entered as "canadian-medical-association-journal.so."—see Figure 1), the computer will tell you how many contents pages for that journal are available. In this case, there are contents pages from six different issues. At this point, you issue the "print" command ("..p") with the parameter "CONT" to indicate that you want to display a table of contents. To see the most recent table of contents among the six, you would add the number "1" to the command. The full command, then, would be "..p cont/1."

Figure 1: *Portion of a sample contents page as displayed by* Current Contents Search™.

```
BRS SEARCH MODE - ENTER QUERY
    1__: canadian-medical-association-journal.so.
        RESULT 6 DOCUMENTS
    2__: ..p cont/1
        1
CONT
    008260 8737.
    Current Contents/Clinical Medicine (CLIN, C) V15 N37
    Current Contents/Life Sciences (LIFE, L) V30 N37
    CLINICAL MEDICINE (in CC/L).
    GENERAL MEDICINE (in CC/C).
    ------------------------------------------------------------------------
    CANADIAN-MEDICAL-ASSOCIATION-JOURNAL.
    1987 AUG 15 V137 N4.
    J6253.
    ------------------------------------------------------------------------
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DRUG LEGISLATION IN THE SILLY SEASON. (English). Editorial. WOODS-D.	271
BRIDGING ART AND SCIENCE. (English). Letter. FIROR-WB.	274
A CURE FOR CANCER QUACKERY NEEDED, CONFERENCE TOLD. (English). Letter. CASHMAN-FE.	274
ENDEMIC INSTITUTIONAL STRONGYLOIDIASIS IN BRITISH-COLUMBIA. (English). Letter. LAMPARD-R.	275
PERSUADING DOCTORS TO PRACTISE IN NONURBAN AREAS. (English). Letter. PATERSON-DC.	275
COMING HOME - TO A CHANGED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. (English). Letter. HEWLETT-P.	276
RATING THE SPECIALTIES. (English). Letter. WAUGH-D.	276
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND ORGAN RETRIEVAL. (English). Letter. MEYER-RJ.	276
FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTATION. (English). Editorial. BUSKARD-NA.	277

When researching the topic of hibernation you would want to cover all possible variations in terms—"hibernation," "hibernating," and so on. To do this you can use the truncation symbol ($) in your request, as in Figure 2: "hibernat$." Again, the database will display how many articles are available containing that keyword in the title. There are 13 documents. If you want to display the results of a subject search, the print command parameters "BIBL" and "HITS" will provide information on the pertinent articles. "BIBL" will give you the *Current Contents*® (*CC*®) edition or editions in which the journal is indexed; the journal category; title, date, volume, and number of the source journal; and *The Genu-*

ine Article™ number. "HITS" will display the articles that contain your search term, including article title, authors, and addresses.

To display all the articles (documents 1-13) in our search on hibernation, the command is "..p 1 bibl, hits/1-13." However, for brevity's sake we typed "1-2" to display only 2 of the 13 documents). Each record consists of several fields labeled with a two-letter code (AN, CC, JC, and so on). These fields give you the article's accession number, the *CC* editions, the journal category, the source journal, *The Genuine Article* number, and the complete article title, author(s), affiliation(s), and address(es).

Figure 2: **KEYWORD SEARCH.** Each record is coded as follows: AN = accession number; CC = *Current Contents*® edition; JC = *Current Contents* journal category; SO = source journal; GA = *The Genuine Article*™ number; AR = article information.

```
BRS SEARCH MODE - ENTER QUERY
    1__: hibernat$
      RESULT 13 DOCUMENTS
    2__: ..p 1 bibl,hits/1-2
      1


AN 013571 8746.
CC Current Contents/Agriculture, Biology
      & Environmental Sciences (AGRI, A) V18 N46
JC ENTOMOLOGY, PEST CONTROL (in CC/A).
SO ENTOMON.
   1987 SEP V12 N3.
GA K3847.
AR
   P179 - P182
   STUDIES ON THE INDUCTION AND TERMINATION OF HIBERNATION OF THE
   TEAK SKELETONIZER EUTECTONA-MACHAERALIS WALKER (LEPIDOPTERA,
   PYRALIDAE). (English). Article.
   PATIL-BV. THONTADARYA-TS.
   AGR RES STN, DHARWAD 580008, INDIA (Reprint).
   References: 0.


      2
AN 013697 8746.
CC Current Contents/Agriculture, Biology
      & Environmental Sciences (AGRI, A) V18 N46
JC PLANT SCIENCES (in CC/A).
SO FIZIOLOGIYA-I-BIOKHIMIYA-KULTURNYKH-RASTENII.
   1987 SEP-OCT V19 N5.
GA K4526.
AR
   P444 - P448
   CHANGES IN THE ISOENZYMIC COMPOSITION OF PEROXIDASE IN
   TILLERING NODES OF WINTER RYE DURING AUTUMN HARDENING AND
   HIBERNATION. (Russian). Article.
   FAIZULLIN-AD. LUKMANOVA-RS.
   ACAD SCI USSR, INST BIOL, PROSP OKTYABRYA 69, UFA 450054, USSR
   (Reprint).
   References: 0.
```

Assume you have heard of a recent paper on nitrate tolerance by an author named Packer. If you are unsure of the author's first name, you can use the command "ROOT," which will display each "Packer" in the database along with initials. Another option is to use the truncation command in your request: "packer-$," as we have done in Figure 3. The resulting display shows that there are 15 documents in the database with an author or coauthor named Packer. If you happen to know Packer's affiliation (in this case, the Mt. Sinai Medical Center, New York), you can also enter that to focus the search. At this point we learn that there are four documents by an author named Packer affiliated with Mt. Sinai. To further narrow the search, you can add "nitrate$," which leaves one pertinent article. Again, the "BIBL" and "HITS" commands will display the full bibliographic information for this paper.

Figure 3: AUTHOR SEARCH. First query requests all articles by "Packer." The second adds the author's affiliation, Mt. Sinai. The third specifies keyword "nitrate." *Current Contents Search*™ displays the full bibliographic record below.

```
BRS SEARCH MODE - ENTER QUERY
    1__: packer-$
    RESULT 15 DOCUMENTS
    2__: 1 and sinai
    RESULT 4 DOCUMENTS
    3__: 2 and nitrate$
    RESULT 1 DOCUMENT
    4__: ..p 3 bibl,hits/1
        1


AN 010954 8741.
CC Current Contents/Clinical Medicine (CLIN, C) V15 N41
    Current Contents/Life Sciences (LIFE, L) V30 N41
JC CLINICAL MEDICINE (in CC/L).
    GENERAL MEDICINE (in CC/C).
SO NEW-ENGLAND-JOURNAL-OF-MEDICINE.
    1987 Sep 24 V317 N13.
GA K0851.
AR
    P799 - P804
    PREVENTION AND REVERSAL OF NITRATE TOLERANCE IN PATIENTS WITH
    CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE. (English). Article.
    PACKER-M. LEE-WH. KESSLER-PD. GOTTLIEB-SS. MEDINA-N.
    YUSHAK-M.
    MT SINAI MED CTR, DIV CARDIOL, 1 GUSTAVE LEVY PL, NEW YORK,
    NY, 10029 (Reprint).
    CUNY MT SINAI SCH MED, DEPT MED, DIV CARDIOL, NEW YORK, NY,
    10029.
    References: 28.
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