## An Address on Addresses

*Address* is an important word in my life. Each week I address the readers of *Current Contents®* [*CC ®* ] through these weekly missiles. Each day I address myself to various business and personal responsibilities. Each year I am invited to address more groups of scientists, librarians and others than convenience or competence allows, and I accept more than conscience permits. I am continually addressing letters and postcards, and receiving them at my own address.

But *address* has a significance to me that goes beyond directing my attention to responsibilities, preparing written messages, speaking to audiences, and designating the places to which objects shall be delivered. The concept of citation indexing is based on the idea of using document addresses as indexing terms. An article's address—journal title, year, and page—is usually sufficient to locate it in a library. Its references include the addresses of related documents. However, it is not this concept of the citation as a document address which concerns me here.

Why are so many scientific journals so careless about author's addresses? Without addresses, or with incomplete ones, how can readers communicate with authors? Isn't communication one of the fundamental purposes of a journal? Why do some journals put the author's address at the beginning of an article, some at the end, others in footnotes, and still others in the front or back of the journal? Why do they resist any attempt at international standardization?

ISI® processes a staggering number of addresses each year. In 1975 it will approximate 1,000,000. *Current Contents* provides the initial main source of author address entries which wind up in our international directory of R&D known as *ISI's Who is Publishing in Science®* [*WIPIS®*]. But the *Science Citation Index®* [*SCI®*] and *Social Sciences Citation Index®* [*SSCI®*] also provide a large number of added addresses since the corporate indexes to *SCI* and *SSCI* cover all addresses—not just those of first authors.

The first page of every article in every scientific journal ought to contain the author's full name and address. The address should be complete and should immediately follow the name. It should include postal codes. It may not be premature to suggest that even telephone numbers be included.

The personalities of editors and publishers no doubt give journals much of their distinct character. However, a balance must be reached between aesthetics and utility, ornamentation and comprehensibility, individualism and consistency. My liberty has not been imperiled by the adoption of postal codes, a seven-digit telephone number, writing legibly, speaking coherently, or other customs and conventions that lubricate the gears of society. The mechanisms of big science must move more easily than was the case for little science. Standardization is necessary to all large scale enterprises.

Is there any justification, within individual journals as reputable as *Science* and *Nature*, for inconsistencies in these policies? Why does a 'lead article' have the author's name at the beginning, while a 'report' puts it at the end?

If our letter writing habits cause these practices to be perpetuated then perhaps we should begin letters by signing at the top. It seems absurd to turn to the end of a letter to find out what you need or want to know before reading it—the author's name.

One of the worst inadequacies of addresses in many journals is ommission of the author's departmental affiliation. The address must be *complete* in order to defy efforts of human postal clerks and others to delay mail rather than expedite it. In closing, let me urge every *CC* reader to examine the address label on the next issue of *CC* you receive. Make certain the address is complete in every respect and conforms to local postal regulations. If not, just address your complaints to me. If everything is okay, then why not address yourself to your favorite journal suggesting the need for consistency in the form and placement of addresses.

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