CURRENT COMMENTS

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ISI's New *Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings*™ Lets You Know What Went on at a Conference Even if You Stayed at Home

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Over the last two decades the number of scientific and technical meetings held throughout the world has doubled. In 1958 about 5,000 meetings were held worldwide.[1] This year about 10,000 scientific meetings will draw participants together from almost every country in the world.[2] The formal purpose of these meetings is the exchange of research results, thoughts and ideas. Informally, the participants get the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet new contributors.

The names used to describe meetings vary widely. Depending on the nature of the meeting and the intentions of its organizers, a "meeting" can be called a congress, symposium, conference, colloquium, session, convention, seminar, workshop, institute, assembly, round table, clinic, teach-in, or summer school. According to Arie Manten of the Elsevier Publishing Company, "Workshop is the fashionable term of the nineteen-seventies when trying to convince funding institutions that the meeting is dynamic and worthwhile."[3]

But no matter what they are called or why they are increasing in number, more conferences mean more published material. About three out of four scientific meetings result in a published record.[2]

The "proceedings" of conferences are published under various designations including symposium, report, record—and proceedings. Many appear as multi-authored books, the titles of which do not even include the word proceedings or any of its synonyms. Others appear in society newsletters or special issues of regularly published journals. Whatever their form and title, any librarian will tell you that the conference literature is among the most difficult to search and to acquire. Consequently, I'm sure this announcement of our plans to publish the *Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings*™ (*ISTP*™) will be appreciated by librarians and researchers all over the world.

Beginning in 1978, *ISTP* will appear monthly with semi-annual cumulations. It will be multidisciplinary, covering the proceedings literature of the life and clinical sciences (including some psychology), agriculture, biology, engineering and applied sciences, and physical and chemical sciences. Naturally

it will include such important mission-oriented fields as environmental and energy sciences. In short, *ISTP* will include all the fields covered by all the *Current Contents*® editions except the social sciences. Overall, about 3,000 separate published proceedings per year will be made accessible.

ISTP is not the first reference tool to attempt to provide bibliographic control over this very elusive literature. But *ISTP* will not merely provide systematic access to overall proceedings documents; it will also index the individual papers they contain. During its first year, *ISTP* will index over 90,000 individual papers. *ISTP* will serve both as a current awareness tool (through the monthly issues) and a retrospective search tool (through the semiannual cumulations). These distinctions are important lest *ISTP* be confused with Data Courier's *Current Programs*[4] (to be called *Conference Papers Index* in 1978) which provides information on forthcoming meetings, the British Lending Library's *Index of Conference Proceedings Received*,[5] Interdok's *Directory of Published Proceedings*, or *Proceedings in Print*.

To understand how comprehensive *ISTP* will be it is first necessary to realize that the 10,000 conferences held each year actually result in only about 7,500 published proceedings.[2] Thus, *ISTP*'s initial coverage of 3,000 proceedings per year will include nearly half of the *total* volumes published. However, as with the *Science Citation Index*® and *Current Contents*, we will use ISI® 's unique resources, with help from our Editorial Advisory Board, to identify the most significant works. Therefore, we can expect that from 75 to 90% of the important papers published in conference proceedings will be accessible through *ISTP*. I expect that Bradford's Law will apply equally to proceedings literature as it does to the journal literature. That is, most of the important material published will be contained in a relatively small core of proceedings. Of course, we plan to regularly increase *ISTP*'s coverage as its development and use permit.

ISTP will put special emphasis on coverage of proceedings literature in life sciences, technology and the applied sciences. There are two reasons for this. First, more conference proceedings are published in the life sciences and technology than in other fields. Second, technologists, engineers, and those in the applied sciences are more prone than workers in other fields to use conference proceedings. P.R. Mills of the University of Bath, England, found that of 400 conferences held in June and July of 1970, approximately 42% concerned the life sciences and 39% technology.[5] By contrast, only 18% were in the physical sciences, and 15% in the social sciences. (The percentages add up to 114% because some of the sample conferences concerned two or more subject groups.)

ISTP's coverage will reflect Mills' figures. We estimate that of *ISTP*'s total coverage the life sciences will comprise about a third. Engineering and technology together will comprise another third of *ISTP*'s total

coverage. The physical and chemical sciences will comprise about 20%, clinical practice about 10%, and agriculture, biology, and the environmental sciences together about 10%.

ISTP is designed to facilitate browsing as well as specific searches. The "main entry" for each proceedings document will be presented in a table-of-contents style that will make it easy to scan the monthly issues to keep up with recently published proceedings. A multi-faceted indexing system will help users locate whatever they are looking for—whether a complete proceedings on a general topic or an individual paper dealing with a specific aspect of a narrow specialty.

In the case of proceedings published in book form, the main entry will give the title and subtitle, series title and volume, editor, publisher and publisher's address, chapter titles, authors, author addresses, and the date and site of the conference. In addition, entries for books will give the Library of Congress number and the International Standard Book Number when available. For proceedings published in journals, like the example in Figure 1, the information will include conference title, journal title, volume, issue, year, titles of papers, authors, author addresses, and the information will enable a librarian or scientist to easily acquire the book or journal from the publisher or through interlibrary loan. The inclusion of authors' addresses also facilitates reprint requests.

The indexing system includes a Permuterm® Subject Index, a Conference Topic Index, a Meeting Location Index, a Sponsor Index, an Author/Editor Index, and a Corporate Index. Each of these indexes will refer the user to the main entry by means of a proceedings number.

Figure 1 contains examples of various *ISTP* entries. The main entry, designated by its proceedings number, is presented in the top half of the illustration, the indexes below it.

The Permuterm Subject Index (PSI) is based upon permutations—or pairings—of significant title words. In Figure 1, title words have been permuted from both the title of the proceedings itself and the titles of individual papers. ***Ophthalmology/Contemporary*** are words from the proceedings title; ***Rhinoplasty/Cosmetic*** and ***Rhinoplasty/Structural*** are title words which appear in individual papers. Beside each of these pairs the proceedings number for the main entry is given. In addition, the PSI will indicate to the user where those terms may be found within the main entry—whether in an individual paper or the proceedings title. If the subject term occurs in the proceedings title, the PSI will indicate this with a "T." If it occurs within the title of an individual paper, the page number of the title within the proceedings will be given.

Like the PSI, the Sponsor, Meeting Location, and Corporate Indexes will refer the user to the main entry via the proceedings number. The Sponsor Index will also include the geographical location of each conference. Since a single organization, such as the National Science Foun-

Figure 1. The *Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings™ (ISTP™)*: samples of various entries.

Contents Of Proceedings (Main Entry)

PROC #00066

AMERICAN SOC OF CONTEMPORARY OPHTHALMOLOGY. PROC OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, Miami, FL, May 5-6, 1976.

Sponsors: Rockefeller Foundation Eye Research Inst National Science Foundation
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY Vol 22 No 4 1976

External Levator Resection *C C Johnson G M Shannon* Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary Boston MA 02114 1
Minimal Ptosis Surgery A New Technique *P T Gavaris L J Girard* Dept of Ophthalmology Ochsner Clinic and Ochsner Foundation Hospital New Orleans LA 70121 47
Problem Cases in Adnexal Trauma *D R Barr* College of Medicine Wayne State University Detroit MI 48201 79
Orbital Fractures Today *J L Yassin* Georgetown University School of Medicine Washington DC 20057 89
Cosmetic Rhinoplasty Technique *R Pickard* Jackson Memorial Hospital Miami FL 33136 97
Structural Changes in Rhinoplasty *J Ehrenreich* Otolaryngology Dept South Miami Hospital Miami FL 33143 107

Titles of individual papers
authors and first authors addresses
for reprint requests

Conference name
location date

Sponsors
Journal title
volume issue year

Each entry has a unique proceedings number which identifies it in *ISTP*'s indexes

Permuterm ® Subject Index

	Proceedings #	Page	
Ophthalmology			
Contemporary	00066	T	Indicates word is in proceedings title
Rhinoplasty			
Cosmetic	00066	97	Indicates page number of article in proceedings
Structural	00066	107	

Sponsor Index

	Proceedings #
Eye Research Inst	
Miami, FL	00066
National Science Foundation	
Miami, FL	00066

Meeting Location Index

	Proceedings #
Florida	
Miami	
American Soc of Contemporary Ophthalmology. Proc of the Annual Meeting	00066

Corporate Index

	Proceedings #	Page
MASSACHUSETTS EYE & EAR INFIRM.		
BOSTON MA		
Johnson CC	00066	1

dation, may sponsor several conferences a year, the conference location may help the user identify the correct meeting. The Meeting Location Index will consist of an alphabetical listing of countries, and the states and cities within them, and will supply the titles and proceedings number for conferences held in each area.

The Corporate Index lets you search by the affiliation of the author. Thus, to use the example in Figure 1, if you remembered that someone from the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary had presented a paper of interest but you didn't know the title or the author's name, you could locate not only the individual paper but the full proceedings through a single look-up in the Corporate Index.

Two other indexes not illustrated here are the Author/Editor Index and the Category Index. Both are simple to use. In the Author/Editor Index, an alphabetical look-up of the name of an author or editor will refer the user to the main entry by the proceedings number. Moreover, the index will indicate by page number, like the *PSI* and Corporate Index, where within the main entry the editor's name will be found, Editors will be designated by an "E" in the page number column.

The Category Index will organize the proceedings according to about 100 broad subject categories. Below each heading will be a listing of related conference titles and their proceedings numbers, to refer the user to the main entry.

Earlier this year I announced that the 1977 *Science Citation Index* (*SCI*®) would include coverage of non-journal material.[6] This non-journal material presently includes published proceedings, monographic series, and multi-authored books. There will be no reduction of proceedings coverage in the *SCI* when *ISTP* comes into being. It is important to note, however, that *ISTP* will cover about 1,250 more separate proceedings volumes than the *SCI*. *ISTP* will also, with one major exception, offer a wider variety of indexing approaches to locate specific information. The exception is that the *SCI* will remain the only place you can use citation indexing to locate proceedings information. In other words, *ISTP* does not contain a citation index.

ISTP will index only proceedings literature which involves one-time outputs of scientific meetings. These should not be confused with such "proceedings" as the *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine*, *Proceedings of the IEEE*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, which in reality are regularly published journals rather than conference proceedings. *ISTP* will not include coverage of such publications, except when special issues include the proceedings of specific, named conferences. We will be carefully screening all publications whose titles or contents suggest that they may really be one-time conference proceedings.

It is important to realize that *ISTP* will cover proceedings *only after they have been published.* Some other tools cover conference programs which may or may not de-

velop into published proceedings.[7] Users of such tools are often frustrated trying to obtain proceedings which do not exist.

Reference librarians are often expected to act as detectives, using fragments of information to locate various items in the proceedings literature. The various indexes found in *ISTP* are vital for such detective work. And if the proceedings can be found in *ISTP*, the user can be sure that it has been published. By its very nature, therefore, *ISTP* will be an important bibliographic verification tool.

ISTP will reduce as much as possible the time lag between publication and indexing that exists with present tools. It is anticipated that the time lag between publication of a proceedings and its coverage in *ISTP* will not exceed two months. However, *ISTP* will not be able to reduce the lag time which occurs between the conference itself and publication of its proceedings. But we do find publishers most cooperative in expediting the processing of this material.

The price of *ISTP* is $500 per year. For information on ordering, please refer to the ad and order form on the back cover of this issue of *Current Contents*.

According to Helmut Drubba of the Technical Information Library in Hanover, West Germany, the proliferation of scientific conferences and their published literature has been caused by two technological developments: the jet plane and offset printing.[7] Conferences held all over the world are made possible to a large extent by jet travel, Drubba contends, and offset printing allows proceedings to be produced in large volume. This has resulted in the bibliographic nightmare that I've talked about before.[6] While *ISTP* may not end that nightmare, it will bring the handling of conference proceedings into the jet age.

When I have dicussed non-journal literature in the past, I pointed out that, unlike earlier decades, authors now seldom repeat in journals work that they have reported in full at meetings. Thus the importance of *ISTP* and non-journal coverage by *SCI* are consistent with the changed conditions of the jet-set world with its computerized typesetting and other means for making science more and more a real-time phenomenon.

1. **Murra K O.** "Futures" in international meetings. *College and Research Libraries* 19:445-50, November 1958.
2. **Short P J.** Bibliographic tools for tracing conference proceedings. *IATUL* (International Association of Technological University Libraries) *Proceedings* 6:50-8, May 1972.
3. **Manten A A.** *Symposia and Symposium publications: a guide for organizers, lecturers and editors of scientific meetings.* Amsterdam, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, 1976.
4. **Baum H.** A current-awareness service based on meetings – the need, the coverage, the service. *Journal of Chemical Documentation* 13:187-9, 1973.
5. **Mills P R.** Characteristics of published conference proceedings. *Journal of Documentation* 29:36-50, March 1973.
6. **Garfield E.** ISI adds "non-journal" material to the 1977 *Science Citation Index*. *Current Contents* No. 9, 28 February 1977, p. 5-6.
7. **Drubba H.** Conference documentation: general overview and survey of the present position. *Associations Internationales* 28:383-7, 1976.