Current Comments

Most-Cited Articles of the 1960s.

1. Physical Sciences

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In 1977 I completed a series of essays on the most-cited articles published in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. 1-3 There were so many highly cited papers in the 1950s that we divided the study into three parts. To continue the series for the 1960s I've taken a similar approach. However, to accommodate the even larger number of papers, I've included 100 papers for each group. In this first part, the 100 most-cited physical sciences papers of the 1960s are covered. The most-cited papers in biomedicine and biochemistry will be covered in two essays in the near future.

We extracted these lists from the Science Citation Index® (SCI®) data base covering 1961 to 1978. Obviously the papers listed in this series are but a small fraction of those that were published or cited. The SCI from 1961-78 contains 71 million citations to authored items.4 Of these, about 25% were citations to papers published in the 1960s. The SCI Source Index alone indexed 1,981,441 papers from 1961-69. Between 1961-78 hundreds of other papers were heavily cited. In fact, 409 were cited over 4000 times, 852 were cited over 3000 times, and 2058 were cited over 2000 times.

I want to stress again that citation frequency is not an absolute measure of importance or significance. While some readers may be in a position to say that some papers listed here made a greater contribution than others, this is not the purpose of our study. However, we can

assert with reasonable confidence that each paper listed has had a significant impact or reflects an active area of interest to science. Small differences in citation frequency have no special significance. Large differences usually reflect activity rather than the intrinsic worth of the method or theory cited. To underscore this point I have listed the papers by subject and then alphabetically by first author, rather than by ranking them according to the number of citations.

Each item on the list was cited more than 500 times during the 18-year period from 1961 to 1978. Fifteen articles were cited more than 1000 times and six more than 1500 times. The average paper on the list received 839 citations.

The papers were published in 41 journals. Five account for exactly half of the 100 articles. Journal of Chemical Physics and Physical Review both published 13 articles. Acta Crystallographica published ten, Journal of the American Chemical Society nine, and Physical Review Letters, five. These journals consistently publish a significant number of highly cited papers. Table 1 lists all the journals represented in the study.

Fifty-five papers on the list have two or more authors. Thirty-eight papers have two, ten have three, three have four, three have five, and one paper has ten authors.

All 100 papers, except two, were originally written in English. The papers by Zubarev and Faddeev were written

Table 1: Journals that published the most-cited 1900's articles listed in Figure 1, according to number of articles.

lournel	Number of Articles
J. Chem. Phys.	13
Phys. Rev.	13
Acta, Crystallogr.	10
J. Amer. Chem. Soc.	9
Phys. Rev. Lett.	5
Nucl. Phys.	4
Rev. Mod. Phys.	4
Anal. Chem.	3
J. Geophys. Res.	3
Nuovo Cimento	3
Ann. Phys.	2
J. Phys. Chem.	2
Phys. Rev. A.	3 2 2 2 2
Prog. Theor. Phys.	2
Advan. Phys.	1
Angew. Chem.	1
Annu. Rev. Astron. Astrophys.	1
Can. J. Chem.	1
Chem. Rev.	1
Comput. J.	1
IBM J. Res. Develop.	1
Inorg, Chem.	1
J. Chem. Soc. A	1
J. Appl. Phys.	1
J. Exp. Theoret. Phys. (USSR)	ì
J. Petrol.	1
J. Soc. Ind. Appl. Math.	1
Math Comput,	1
Mol. Phys.	1
Nature	1
Nucl. Data	1
Physics	1
Phys. Lett.	l
P. Roy. Soc. Lond. A	1
Quart. Rev.	!
Rep. Prog. Phys.	1
Rev. Pure Appl. Chem.	1
Sov. Phys. JETP.	i i
Sov. Phys. Usp. **	!
Spectrochim, Acta	!
Usp. Fiz. Nauk.	1

^{*}translation of J. Exp. Theoret, Phys. (USSR) article.

in Russian, but also appeared in translated versions.

Sixty institutions are represented on the list (shown in Table 2). Fortyseven of the authors come from just seven institutions.

American laboratories dominate the list with 36 of the 60 research institutions. The United Kingdom follows with

ten. France is represented by three institutions; Australia, Japan and the Netherlands by two each. The Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USSR are represented by one each.

Twelve authors contributed two or more papers to the list. Pople authored six papers and Gell-Mann five. Four of Pople's papers are from a five-part series on molecular orbital theory published in *Journal of Chemical Physics*. Bjorken, Cromer, Segal, Weinberg, and Woodward account for three papers each. Clementi, Hoffmann, LePichon, and Scheraga each wrote two papers.

Nemethy and Scheraga co-authored a four-part series on the structure of water and hydrophobic bonding in proteins. Parts 1, 2 and 4 were published in Journal of Chemical Physics. Part 3 was published in Journal of Physical Chemistry, since it was presented at the Colloid Symposium of the American Chemical Society. Most of the papers presented at the symposium were subsequently published in Journal of Physical Chemistry or Journal of Colloid Science.⁵

Six Nobel laureates authored twelve of the articles listed. W.E. Lamb was awarded the prize for physics in 1955 for his research on the hydrogen spectrum. The 1965 prize for physics went to R. P. Feynman for his research on quantum electrodynamics of elementary particles. M. Gell-Mann received the 1969 physics prize for describing the structure of the particles of high energy physics. The 1977 prize for physics went to P. W. Anderson for his work in solidstate physics. R. B. Woodward received the 1965 prize in chemistry for developing methods for the synthesis of complex organic compounds. The 1973 chemistry prize was awarded to G. Wilkinson for his research on organometallic compounds.

Most laureates were awarded their prizes several years after their most-cited articles were published. However, there are two notable exceptions. Feynman received the prize in 1965. His

[&]quot;translation of Usp. Fiz. Nauk. article.

Table 2:	Institutional affiliations of authors of the	
	most-cited 1960s articles, according to	
	number of authors.	

Institutions	Number of Authors
Carnegie-Mellon Univ. (Pittsbu	argh, PA) 14
Univ. California	10
Berkeley	4
La Jolla	1
Los Alamos, NM	3
Los Angeles	2 idena, CA) 6
California Inst. Technol. (Pasa Columbia Univ.	idena, CA) 6
New York, NY	2
Palisades, NY	4
Cornell Univ. (Ithaca, NY)	6
Harvard Univ. (Cambridge, M	
Bell Telephone Labs.	4
Murray Hill, NJ	3
Whippany, NJ	1
IBM Corp.	4
San Jose, CA	3
Yorktown Heights, NY	1
	, 4
Stanford Univ. (Stanford, CA- CERN (Switzerland)	, 3
Massachusetts Inst. Technol.	3
(Cambridge, MA)	· ·
Northwestern Univ. (Evanston	(, IL) 3
Univ. London (Imperial: West	
and University Colleges). E	
Univ. Minnesota (Minneapoli	
Acad. Sci. USSR (USSR)	
Atom. Energy Res. Est. (Engl	land) 2
E. I. DuPont de Nemours & C	
(Wilmington, DE)	
Ecole Normale Superieure (Fi	
Oak Ridge Nat. Lab. (Oak Ri	dge, TN) 2
Princeton Univ. (Princeton, N	(J) 2
Univ. Sydney (Australia)	
Univ. Washington (Seattle, W	'A) 2
Argonne Nat. Lab. (Lemont,	
Brookhaven Nat. Lab. (Uptor Carnegie Inst. (Washington, I	
Coll. France (Paris, France)	1
Duke Univ. (Durham, NC)	1
Electro-Techn. Lab. (Japan)	i
Faculte des Sciences (Orsay,	France) 1
Inst. Kern Phys. (Amsterdam	1
Kyoto Univ. (Japan)	
Lockheed Missiles & Space C	'o. 1
(Sunnyvale, CA)	1
Max Planck Inst. (FRG) Nat. Bureau Standards (Wash	
RCA Labs. (Princeton, NJ)	1
Rijks Univ. (Netherlands)	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Rockefeller Univ. (New York	(NY) 1
Royal Radar Est. (England)	ĺ
Shell Dev. Co. (Emeryville, C	'A) 1
Univ. Arizona (Tucson, AZ)	1
Univ. Bergen (Norway)	1
Univ. Cambridge, (England)	1

Univ. Chicago (Chicago, IL)	
Univ. Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)	1
Unix, Coll. of Wales (Aberystwyth, Wales)	
Univ. Illinois (Urbana, IL)	
Univ. Leeds (England)	
Univ. Melbourne (Australia)	
Univ. Oxford (England)	
Univ. Rochester (Rochester, NY)	
Univ. Texas (Austin, TX)	
Univ. Torino (Italy)	
Univ. Uppsala (Sweden)	
Univ. Wisconsin (Madison, W1)	
US Naval Res. Lab. (Washington, DC)	
Veteran's Administration Hosp. (Durham, NC)	
Western Reserve Univ. (Cleveland, OH)	
Yale Univ. (New Haven, CT)	

most-cited paper was published in 1969. He also appeared on our list of most-cited physical sciences papers of the 1950s. 1

Lamb received the award in 1955, but his most-cited paper was published in 1964. Columbia University sociologist Harriet Zuckerman points out that laureates are highly cited not only in the years before receiving the prize, but they continue to make significant contributions to science in the years following.⁶

Five of the articles have appeared as Citation Classics in Current Contents. In this weekly feature, authors comment on their research and interpret why it attracted so much attention. The reference to each Citation Classic follows the full bibliographic data in the list

We have divided the list into twelve physical sciences categories: high energy particle physics, nuclear physics, atomic physics, molecular physics, solid-state physics, geophysics, statistical physics, astrophysics, organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, physical chemistry, and applied mathematics.

Sixteen papers are on high energy particle physics. High energy particle physics is the study of fundamental units of matter of subatomic size. Many of the particles discussed in articles on this list are "unstable"; that is, they do not exist naturally as particles for long.

These particles—mesons, baryons, leptons, and pions, for example—can be observed only through the use of high speed scattering experiments that convert them from radiation to particles. Seven papers in the elementary particles group describe such scattering experiments. The rest propose models to explain the existence of these particles.

Eleven papers are on nuclear physics, the study of the interaction of the constituents of the nucleus in an atom. By examining these interactions, nuclear physicists hope to understand nuclear forces and reactions.

The various structural properties of the nucleus, such as spin, mass, energy, and reaction threshold, are determined through nuclear scattering experiments. Six nuclear physics papers discuss different applications of these scattering experiments. Three more papers deal with determining the energy levels of nuclei with different atomic numbers. Physicists can learn more about how nuclear reactions vary by comparing the energy levels of different nuclei. One article discusses a unified theory of nuclear reactions.

The remaining article in the nuclear physics group presents an updated table of atomic masses. It is important for physicists to calculate exact values for atomic mass because nuclear reaction energies and rates are determined from these values.

Twelve papers are on atomic physics. Atomic physics describes the physical properties of atoms in terms of the interaction between electrons and the nucleus. Atomic physics also describes the behavior of light and X-rays. Research in atomic physics contributed to the development of navigation and collision-control systems as well as radiologic equipment.

Scientists determine the structure of the atom through X-ray and electron scattering experiments. Eight papers in the atomic physics category describe these experiments. According to Harold Hanson of the University of Florida, X-ray scattering experiments are important because they "provide data, coefficients, parameters, etc., which are fundamental to a great number of experiments or studies.... The atomic scattering factors have utility for a much wider group of investigators [than quantum theorists alone], viz., X-ray crystallographers, electron diffractionists, and even high-energy theorists."

In fact, the four most-cited articles on the list discuss X-ray scattering experiments. Stewart's paper specifically describes X-ray scattering for the hydrogen atom. Stewart says his paper is highly cited because "it contains a table of X-ray scattering factors... [that] has been incorporated in most standard X-ray crystallography computer packages and generates an 'automatic' citation each time a new crystal structure containing a hydrogen atom is solved."8 Cromer authored three papers on the computation of X-ray scattering results. These four papers received a total of 10,308 citations. They account for 60% of all citations in atomic physics.

The other four atomic physics articles describe optical masers, self-consistent equations for a gas of electrons, open shell electron systems, and radiation fields.

Twelve papers are on solid-state physics, the study of the properties of metals, semiconductors, and other solids in terms of their atomic and electronic structure. From the structure of these materials, scientists can explain their electrical, magnetic, and conductive properties. This knowledge has contributed to developments in the radar, communications, and computer industries.

The molecular structure of crystals is determined by passing a beam of X-rays through a thin sheet of material, producing a patterned shadow on a photographic plate. The pattern of the shadow reveals the shape, size, and orientation of atoms in the sheet. Eight papers on the list discuss this X-ray diffraction technique in crystallography.

Three papers deal with the physical properties of magnetic metals and alloys. One paper discusses the temperatures below which metals and alloys lose all electrical resistance and become "superconductive."

Eighteen articles are on molecular physics. Molecular physics examines the bonding between atoms in a molecule. This research enables chemists and medical specialists to identify unknown molecular compounds and predict their reactivity and stability.

Researchers determine the identity of unknown compounds from nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and electron spin resonance (ESR) spectra. A series of peaks is registered on a recording graph when a compound absorbs magnetic and radio waves. Each peak identifies one of the atoms as a specific element within the particular molecular environment. Seven articles on the list deal with NMR and ESR analysis of molecular compounds.

Seven more molecular physics articles discuss molecular orbital theory. This theory defines the electronic structure of molecules and compounds. Researchers can predict the chemical behavior of a compound on the basis of its electronic structure. The four remaining articles cover a variety of topics, including atomic screening constants, Hückel theory, and atomic and molecular wave functions.

Four papers are on geophysics. They all discuss continental drift and seafloor spread—plate tectonics. Preston Cloud asserts that plate tectonics "seems well on its way to becoming to geology what relativity has been to physics, what atomic theory has been to chemistry, and what molecular biology has been to genetics—a general field theory within which a great number of seemingly unrelated phenomena can be coordinated and explained."

Three papers are on applied mathematics. They deal with algorithms for computing Fourier series and least-squares of nonlinear parameters. Both

are important for the calculation of scattering experiment results.

One paper is on astrophysics. The paper discusses astronomical measurements in the infrared spectrum. Astrophysicists calculate the distance, velocity, and composition of stars and galaxies from the radiation they emit.

Two papers are on statistical physics. Statistical physics computes physical properties from the mathematical behavior of large groups of atoms and molecules. The two papers discuss double-time Green functions and Brownian motion.

Nine papers are on organic chemistry. Two of them describe the bonding and synthesis of peptides and proteins. Three others deal with the synthesis and reaction of fatty acids, carbonyl compounds, and saturated ketones. One paper deals with the machine computation of molecular geometry. Other topics include stereochemistry, orbital symmetry and NMR shifts in polar molecules.

Four papers are on inorganic chemistry. Each paper deals with a separate topic, including metal-nitrogen bonds, acids and bases, and the properties of anions in solution.

Eight papers fall in the physical chemistry category. Two papers discuss thermodynamic properties of water and protein bonds. One deals with electronegativity. Other subjects include equilibrium critical phenomena, electrode polarography, and bond dissociation energies.

In the near future I will continue this study by taking a look at the most-cited life sciences articles of the 1960s.

As with all other studies in which we select papers by absolute citation frequency, we ignore many important papers and fields. It would be ridiculous to suggest that only one paper in astrophysics is worthy of mention. To work out an adequate system of classification to cover all disciplines or research areas is not a trivial task. Is it more important to list yet another highly cited paper in

particle physics or should we concentrate on fields that produce fewer but possibly more important papers? We can call attention to such work by looking for the most-cited papers in given

journals, fields, clusters or whatever. The subjectivity of such selections need not be criticized so long as we are aware that they are indeed subjective.

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Figure 1: 100 most-cited articles of the 1960s in the physical sciences. Authors' affiliations follow each citation. If an article has appeared as a Citation Classic, a reference follows the author affiliations,

Total Citations 1961-1978*

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