

The Scientist Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary- And Its Millionth 'Hit' On The World Wide Web

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Author: Eugene Garfield

This is the 240th consecutive issue of *The Scientist*, marking our 10th anniversary. Such a milestone prompted this review of the publication's original mission statement.

In my inaugural commentary (E. Garfield, *The Scientist*, Oct. 20, 1986, page 9), which is reprinted on the following page, I discussed the basic reason for its launch: to be the first trade newspaper for scientists. We envisioned that it would be similar to publications for physicians, engineers, and lawyers that focus on practical information about career opportunities and professional concerns-in short, the human side of science.

The motivation to create a trade scientific newspaper grew out of my early interest in creating effective tools to help manage the information flood. Current Contents, the Science Citation Index, and other information-management tools were developed to give time-pressured researchers convenient access to current and retrospective literature. *The Scientist* is a different product, in both format and content, but it shares the same basic goal-to help scientists keep informed in an era of increasing information overload.

Many specialist and popular publications cover new scientific discoveries. But *The Scientist* has a different and unique niche. From its start, *The Scientist* has concentrated on recurring career-oriented themes-funding, employment trends, science policy and legislation, the economic impact and benefits of scientific research, the ethical and societal implications of research, and so on.

Over the years, several features have been developed to serve this mission. For example, the Research section focuses on identifying emerging fields that may lead to increased employment and funding opportunities. It also profiles key National Institutes of Health programs to alert readers to where funding is targeted now and in the future. And the Hot Papers feature-one of the most popular sections of our newspaper as measured by readership surveys and Internet access statistics-was developed to alert readers to research articles with high immediate impact. The authors of these papers provide comments to help readers understand the significance of their work in nontechnical language.

Two other features of *The Scientist* address practical "bread and butter" concerns of scientists. The Profession section offers how-to advice on the main career activities of researchers-writing better grant applications, making more effective presentations, preparing more informative research articles, selecting the most appropriate publications for submission, evaluating and promoting one's skills for alternative careers, and more.

The Tools and Technology section surveys the state of the art in laboratory instrumentation and data management to assist researchers in their purchasing decisions.

Another founding vision for *The Scientist* was to build a sense of community among researchers. Ten years ago, scientists often complained that it was difficult to voice their opinions on topics relevant to their profession. Our Opinion,

Commentary, and Letters sections all provide this op-ed outlet as an open forum. In short, we envisioned a truly interactive publication that encouraged the frequent exchange of ideas between readers. Since our founding, technology has advanced to enable us to make a quantum leap from this early concept of an interactive publication.

The Scientist was the first science publication to publish in toto on the Internet. In 1992, The Scientist became available worldwide and free of charge in an ASCII text-only format on the AT&T server under a five-year National Science Foundation Internic Award. The full text of current and back issues through 1991 are still available via gopher search.

In January of this year, we launched our World Wide Web edition, which includes not only full editorial content but also photos, illustrations, cartoons, and crossword puzzles (E. Garfield, The Scientist, Jan. 8, 1996, page 11). The Web edition currently includes all issues from June 1995 to the present, with hot links to our complete gopher archive through 1991.

The appeal of our Web edition is clearly demonstrated in user statistics. Whereas

our ASCII text-only edition averaged in excess of 25,000 "hits" per month, the Web edition exceeds 180,000 hits per month. And with this issue, there have now been in excess of 1 million cumulative hits on our Web edition.

So where will The Scientist go in the future? Certainly, the Web edition will continue to evolve and become an ever greater and more important part of our future. It can certainly overcome the high costs of foreign postage as well as the increasing cost of domestic mail. We are in the process of extending our Internet archive back through 1986.

We are also actively researching a project to make all back issues available on CD-ROM.

The key to the future development of new features in our print edition and growth beyond our current 32 pages is dependent on our ability to attract advertisers and spread the word about our Web site.

However we may evolve in the future, in terms of both content and distribution, our mission will be the same as it was 10 years ago-to uniquely provide useful and practical information about the career concerns of the research scientist.