

# THE INFORMATION SCIENTIST

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## Some Elementary Economics of Publishing

There is a tendency prevalent amongst subscribers to journals to disregard the first notice for renewal on subscriptions. This tendency is reinforced by the practice of many popular magazines of making special renewal offers to "old" subscribers when they realize the end has really come. Most scientific journals, including *Current Contents*, do not make such last-ditch efforts.

But many subscribers continue to ignore the first invoice to the ultimate detriment of all concerned. To do so wastes your time and ours -- and the net result is higher costs. It will surprise some readers to learn that it frequently costs *ISI* over \$10 to collect payment on a single subscription! This is really not fair to those who renew and pay promptly. Note that renewal is not the same as payment. It is incredible how much time may elapse between renewal and actual payment. It is also incredible how many renewals never reach us due to purchasing department delays, lost mail, or mishandling by agents!

Publishers have devised many schemes to reduce the cost of processing subscription payments. One method used by *ISI* and others is the multiple-year subscription. We provide a significant discount for multiple-year subscriptions. Multiple-year subscriptions cut down on paperwork and eliminate any possible gap in the receipt of *CC*.

Some of the correspondence we receive indicates the complexity of a seemingly simple problem. From time to time, I receive a letter from an irate subscriber asking why he is no longer receiving *Current Contents*. Our records show that the reader, or his purchasing department, has ignored not only repeated invoices but also repeated notices informing him that his subscription has expired.

We realize that our subscribers are quite preoccupied with other important problems, but won't you help cut down the loss of time, money and energy by approving payment, or by enclosing a check promptly, or by informing *ISI* of your plans. If you are going on leave or sabbatical, let us know. If possible, arrange for a three, four or five year subscription. On another page of this issue we have listed the substantial discounts available for multiple-year subscriptions. These will protect you against inflation and other unforeseen budget cuts. The time, money, and energy saved will be passed on in the form of better service.