



much when the Xerox machine came along. But surprisingly, copying machines have in some respects engendered even more reprint exchanging because the process fosters more communication. It is, as Goffman describes scientific communication, an epidemiologic phenomenon.<sup>2</sup>

There is a certain ego-gratification in the reprint business, to be sure. The reprint request itself somehow indicates that the requester is interested in your work and wants you to know that. In turn, most authors do not tell requesters they could read the article in a library. Reprints are, after all, a form of public relations and there is nothing wrong in that. Most of us mail out reprints in answer to any request. Indeed, lengthy mailing lists are maintained by reprint exchangers. It is not unusual for an author to require 2,000 reprints of a single article.

Reprint exchange may seem patently absurd to the purist who regards journal articles merely as a means of reporting scientific information. That is a somewhat naive conception of the scientist and his needs for ego-gratification and peer judgment.

But now, ironically, reprint exchange, a practice that learned journals should have made unnecessary, provides the scientist a solution to the problem created by the superabundance of journals. Private correspondence could deliver only so much. The publication establishment delivers too much! Reprint exchange provides a physical realization of the

“personalized” journal.<sup>3,4</sup> And although many ISI® products and services facilitate the “personalized” journal, they do not as yet provide a specific mechanism for expediting, indeed stimulating, the reprint exchange process in an efficient manner.

We do, of course, provide author addresses in *Current Contents*®, and we shall be adding them soon to *ASCA*® reports. ISI products and services offer an alternative to reprint exchange, but I have never imagined that they would ever be accepted as a replacement for it. The practice is not only too well entrenched, but its underlying cause is sociological, not scientific or managerial. The average scientist will use an *OATS*® or *ASCA-matic* service only when he is desperately in a hurry to obtain an article or when he may indeed prefer to remain anonymous to its author!

Therefore, although we provide an economic alternative to reprints or inter-library loans when scientific information is the sole requirement, we must recognize and even foster the process that users prefer. There are at least two solutions to the problem. A long-term amelioration is, I believe, to be found in the daily “newspaper” of science that I proposed almost ten years ago. I will be saying more about this in the months to come. A short-term approach to the reprint exchange problem is, I believe, to be found in an ISI *Reprint Expediting Service*. In the near future I shall describe Project *REX*—solution “extraordinaire.”

1. Schneider, J. H. Reprint clearinghouse. *Science* 165:126, 1969.
2. Goffman, W. & Newill, V. A. Generalization of epidemic theory; an application to the transmission of ideas. *Nature* 204:225-228, 1964.
3. Garfield, E. *ASCA-matic*, the personalized journal. *Current Contents* No. 31, July 30, 1968, p. 5.
4. ————. *ASCA* plus *OATS* equals the “repackaged” or “personalized” journal. *Current Contents* No. 30, July 26, 1972, p. 5-6.