

a reliable measure of scholarship. But the notion that such a measure may indeed be valid widely persists. The idea is plainly outworn and outmoded.

As one who has lived in many a dusty stack, I can vividly recall doctoral "theses" consisting of word-for-word concordances of ancient literary works or documents. Today no department chairman would consider such a project worthy of a doctoral candidate--the job can be done overnight by a computer. But the same department chairman may be otherwise completely blind to the value of newer information retrieval methodologies.

Why do so many archaic practices, as well as attitudes, linger for so long? Why have most natural-science journal editors found it possible to survive without using Roman-numeral volume numbers, while so many pedantic social-sciences editors trouble authors and their readers with their endless CLXVIs. This trivial example is not so trivial as it may first seem. I estimate that handling Roman numerals costs us about \$10,000 a year in producing the *Social Sciences Citation Index*TM.¹

The use of a numbered or alphabetized list of legible references in a bibliography, rather than the use of illegible footnotes, has become almost general practice in natural-science journals. The referencing of journal articles in the social sciences is a veritable morass. (The footnoted footnote is my particular *bête-noire*.) I conservatively estimate that ISI spends more than \$250,000 a year untangling the webs of documentation woven by authors and editors who cling to obsolete styles and style manuals.

Looking ahead ten years, I forecast that such archaic practices will wither and die--hopefully even faster than they did in the natural sciences. The financial burden of maintaining the

footnote style is incredible. Computerized typesetting systems have plainly revealed how costly the practice is where common sense never could.

This is but one example of the way in which information technology is going to change the dissemination of information in the social sciences. Younger authors will insist upon concise styles of presentation that facilitate quicker publication. Experienced publishers of natural-science journals are already beginning to fill a vacuum that exists in the social sciences for such outlets.

As this happens, social scientists will note a definite increase in reprint requests. ISI services like *Current Contents* and *ASCA*[®] will make authors and publishers more address conscious. Furthermore they will insist that their favorite journals be listed in *CC*, and indexed in *SCI*[®] or *SSCI*[™].

More than one scholar told me in 1955 that he could not "afford" *CC* at \$25.00 a year. Today that same scholar tells me he cannot "afford" to be without it at five times that price.

While forecasting the various impacts of information technology in the social sciences, I see them as self-fulfilling prophecies. There will be more attention given to the design of contents pages, to timing, to publication deadlines, and to the use of English by foreign journals--in contents pages and abstracts.

The problem of language is much more acute in the social sciences than in the natural sciences. The social sciences lack the international Graeco-Latin linguistic base of the natural sciences. If foreign bioscientists have felt that American authors have ignored their writings, then foreign social scientists can be *sure* of the fact. Social scientists are *supposedly* more liberally educated than natural scientists. But

surveys have shown English-speaking social scientists to have less facility in foreign languages than natural scientists. On the other hand, if our Eastern European and Russian colleagues would have us read their papers they should use English abstracts or preferably use the vehicle of the international journal. Certainly many, if not most, leading English-language journals can be regarded as sufficiently international to welcome contributions from any nation. However, it would help if more professional society journals added foreign scientists to their boards.

A heightened information-consciousness among social scientists, along with an appreciation of the potential benefits of information technologies, should help bridge the gap between the N cultures of the social and behavioral specialties. If biologists and chemists can be accused of parochialism, social and behavioral specialists cannot escape the same accusation merely because they sit on the other side of the gap between science and the humanities. Perhaps citation studies will reveal just how parochial they are. The opportunities for studies in the sociology of the social sciences seem pretty obvious.

CC and SSCI--along with the information-consciousness their use will develop--can do the world a great service. They will reduce redundancy in the social-sciences literature and help improve communication among disciplines that remain as separated and

isolated in the journals as they do on university campuses.

I also hope that social scientists will set a new and useful example for their natural-sciences colleagues--the use of terse conclusions.^{2,3} However, priority must be given to use of intelligible, informative titles. This will not be easy considering the literary licence allowed and enjoyed by most scholars. Too many article titles in social-sciences journals are written in so specialized an in-group code that even my expertise as an indexer can't help me. The information content of *Current Contents* will be immensely increased when titles--and subtitles in the form of terse conclusions--provide nuggets of information intelligible to a variety of readers--readers who will then be encouraged to pursue new ideas and their application. Something of the sort may be responsible for the popularity of our *ISI Press Digest*. A more universal application of the concept will require cooperation of authors, editors, and publishers. And it will benefit us all.

The history of *Current Contents* therefore suggests that we will see gradual though perceptible changes in scholarly publication practices. Newer journals will adapt to the newer methodologies and eventually will set an example for scientific journals in use of better author indexing, unambiguous bibliographic practices, and use of terse conclusions and abstracts.⁴

1. I will confess for him that the editor of *Fortune* does also--but *Fortune* is social-sciences source material, if not a social-sciences journal. To give him credit, however, the editor puts his Roman-numeral volume number in minute type in an out-of-the-way place, plainly hoping to discourage its use.

2. Garfield, E. Unintelligible abbreviations and sloppy words in article titles create magic (invisible) spots for indexers. *Current*

Contents No. 48, 29 November 72, p. 5-7.

3. Bernier, C.L. Terse literatures. I. Terse conclusions. *J. Amer. Soc. Inform. Sci.* 21:316-9, 1970.

4. Many aspects of this subject are well explored in "Record of the Conference on the Future of Scientific and Technical Journals," in *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* PC-16(3), September 1973. See especially: Maxwell, R. Survival values in technical journals. *ibid.*, 64-5.