

FOREWORD

Early in 1967 I was scanning *Current Contents Physical Sciences* in the foyer of a London hotel, waiting to meet a colleague in the electronics business. A camera flash went off and an American gentleman who introduced himself as Eugene Garfield said, "How do you like it? You are one of only a handful of UK subscribers."

A week or two later I wrote to Gene suggesting ways of rectifying the shortage of European subscriptions. I received a quick reply and found myself in Philadelphia discussing the idea. Knowing very little about ISI or its products, I followed the advice of a rather well known American, Abraham Lincoln: "It's better to remain silent and appear to be a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." This is good advice — I returned to the UK with a new job. The move from electronics research to information salesman had been done quicker than it takes to say Institute for Scientific Information.

I liked the company's attitude. It gave me carte blanche to proceed in Europe with every chance to succeed without interference on the assumption that the man on the spot knows best. If it did not work out, I was on 90 days notice to leave. Very fair. I did the job and later reminded Gene of my earlier experience on research projects. He made me Vice President of ISI's R&D. I left ISI in 1980 while I was still young enough to start my own business.

Francis Bacon said, "It is esteemed a kind of dishonour unto learning to descend to enquiry or meditation upon matters mechanical," but I believe Garfield thought that ISI's products could do better in technology and engineering. We had discussed the rather different information requirements of engineers and I showed him a piece I had written about the edge-notched card information system I had devised in 1961. He knew I was an information-conscious engineer who published.

Garfield had already produced an illustrated publication showing how the *Science Citation Index* could be used to trace the history of the Genetic Code although he knew nothing about the subject¹. After joining ISI I carried out a similar exercise on a smaller scale to trace the development of Amorphous Semiconductors and found that the system worked equally well².

It had been alleged that the *SCI* would not perform well for tracing foreign research. Before lecturing in Moscow I traced the progress of Soviet work on Explosive Welding³. Again the system worked well.

As soon as microcomputer technology became commercially useful, Gene had thought about its use for organising and indexing a reprint collection. He encouraged me to investigate so I went to California in 1977 and brought back to the UK two microcomputers with the newly-introduced disc-based operating systems. Limited storage was a problem so in conjunction with a UK software house we designed an arrangement for matching compressed records against compressed term-queries.

The result was PRIMATE⁴, later to become an ISI product called Sci-Mate.

Gene may not have remembered the comment made by another rather well-known American Mark Twain: “An Englishman is a person who does things because they have been done before; an American is a person who does things because they haven’t been done before.” Was it wise to make Cawkell VP R&D of an American company, and, you may reasonably ask, “Why should Cawkell be asked to write the Foreword for this volume following such giants as Lederberg, Djerassi, and de Solla Price?

Gene must have wanted to accord the honour, probably for the last time, not to an eminent person, but to a personal friend. Gene is not an ordinary man so the friendship is unbalanced. He does unexpected, entertaining things. I do not. He sent me Volume 1 of this series and wrote inside it: “To my dear friend and colleague Tony Cawkell. As a co-author of this book of essays I am indebted to you for your many contributions to ISI’s success.”

Whenever I go to Philadelphia, Gene always makes plenty of time for an information exchange. In the evening we usually eat at one place and then move on to an ice cream restaurant. The brand is important and so are the toppings. Marvelous stuff. Incidentally Haagen-Dazs frozen yoghurt arrived in the UK recently.

Garfield is impulsive. He met V.V. Nalimov at a Moscow Book Fair and said he would like to publish one of his books. “But your Institute does not publish books,” said Nalimov, to which Gene replied, “It hasn’t yet, but it will now.”

Gene often visits London or passes through en route to Salford, Siam, or Samarkand. It’s easy to think of anecdotal stories showing his curiosity and impulsiveness.

On one occasion he turned up at Heathrow carrying two huge packages which turned out to be a sail board. The problem was where to sail? We loaded the thing into the car bound for a local, rather muddy lake. It was cold and there was no wind. It wasn’t a success.

On another visit to London he arrived very late without making a reservation at a time when hotel rooms were hard to find. The airline found him some overflow accommodation in student’s digs. Early the following morning he phoned and said he had not had the time to get any pounds, would I mind popping over with the necessary? I imagine he was talking into one of those old-fashioned phones screwed to the wall on a stalk, with his hand cupped over it so that a suspicious landlady up the hall couldn’t hear. When I collected him he said he had just breakfasted with the students—the most interesting breakfast he had ever had!

Baruch Blumberg said that Gene “Has made an outstanding contribution to the construction of ordered patterns in the world of science.” Indeed he has and his curiosity has led him to publish some remarkable *Current Comments* in *Current Contents*, later to appear in the annual Volume 5 of *Essays*. As Roald Hoffmann said in an earlier foreword, “It would be a dull world without Gene Garfield’s essays.”

Gene is backed with editorial research assistance and resources at ISI able to provide information about anything you care to mention. He might have included

in his essay "The debt of humour in science to Lewis Carroll"⁵ those immortal lines:

The time has come, the Walrus said, to talk of many things
Of shoes and ships and sealing wax
Of cabbages and kings,
And why the sea is boiling hot and whether pigs have wings.

He could discuss any of the items in this list without difficulty.

Readers of earlier editions of the *Essays* will know that Garfield writes a good deal about aspects of the *Science Citation Index*, whether it be in the ongoing series about the most-cited articles in various disciplines, about journal citation studies, or about bibliometric indicators. He also writes in a philosophical vein with pieces such as "What makes a person creative?" Every now and again he comes out with a curiosity demonstration. "Are we ignoring snoring?" is one such.

In this essay Garfield recalls his experience as a labourer in a Colorado construction camp where the sound of snoring was deafening." However, after a day of digging on the site, nothing could keep him awake. He explains how a "fast-moving column of air may meet resistance and induce vibration along the upper airway," and provides a diagram showing how the system functions. He cites a case in which a woman was charged with assault by her husband. After listening to the unbearable noise and asking him several times to turn over, she "tapped him lightly with a billy club."

ISI is a unique company created by the unique enterprise of Eugene Garfield. The boring reality is that today's business activities often require that entrepreneurs must give way to a formal corporate structure. Roald's fears will be realised—Gene will no longer entertain us with *Current Comments* or with the *Essays* in their present form. Few readers will be pleased with this news.

Garfield and ISI are synonymous, but the lessening of the bond will not impede the activity of so fertile a brain. Gene and I have an enduring friendship which has not suffered by reason of changes and the intervening Atlantic. Long may he flourish!

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1. Garfield E, Sher IH & Torpie R J. *The use of citation data in writing the history of science*. Philadelphia, PA: Institute for Scientific Information, 1964. 86p.
2. Cawkell A E. Search strategy, construction and use of citation networks, with a socio-scientific example: Amorphous semi-conductors and S.R. Ovshinsky. *JASIS* 25(2):123-130, 1974.
3. Garfield E. Explosive-welding search reverberates in Moscow seminar on citation networks. *Essays of an Information Scientist*. Philadelphia:ISI Press, 1977. Vol. 1, p. 354-358.
4. ———. Introducing PRIMATE — Personal Retrieval of Information by Microcomputer and Terminal Ensemble. *Essays of an Information Scientist*. Philadelphia:ISI Press, 1980. Vol. 3, p. 551-5.
5. ———. Humor in Science: The Lewis Carroll Connection. *Essays of an Information Scientist*. Philadelphia:ISI Press, 1991. Vol. 12, p. 24-9.