

Expanded *ISI Press Digest* Helps Bridge
Gaps within the Social Sciences

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We are expanding the *ISI Press Digest!* This week readers of the *Social & Behavioral Sciences* edition of *Current Contents*® will find eight rather than four pages of digests. I hope that readers of other editions of *CC*® will by now have found the *PD* consistently interesting enough to investigate the values of using *CC/S&BS*. *ISI* is quite liberal in offering free trials for all its services.

The *ISI Press Digest* was launched a year ago. I described its purpose then as follows. "Too many scientists feel that 'public relations' is not only a waste of time, but also a kind of blasphemous malpractice alien to professionalism. Nothing could be further from the truth . . . Since so few scientists write intelligibly, the professional science writer or reporter is an important intermediary between the scientist and the taxpayer. It is vital that we be aware of how he presents us to the public. When the science writer does his job well, his output can be very useful to us. The *Press Digest* will call atten-

tion to well-written articles which can help in communicating with students, laymen, and relatives."¹

As you can see, we thought of the *Press Digest* originally in terms of an intelligence service of sorts—what are people saying about science? The concept was a modest effort to help the scientist keep informed about public opinion, and then to stimulate his or her attempts to influence it. Thus the *Press Digest* is part of my general concern for the future of science and the need for a science lobby.

After six months of producing the *Press Digest*, I reported that, "*PD* has turned out to be something of a hybrid. Material is also selected from the *scholarly press*. Half the digests are from journals covered in some edition of *CC*, but primarily from *CC/Social, Behavioral and Educational Sciences*. These are the areas which most readers of other *CC* editions need covered." In other words, we had perhaps subconsciously

realized that a first step toward an effective lobby for science was "to bridge the communication gaps between different areas of science and scholarship, and between science and the lay public . . ." I noted at the same time that, "It is very frustrating not to be able to select all the interesting material our scanning produces. It is equally frustrating not to be able to digest all we select."²

Even with the new enlargement of the *Press Digest*, we won't be able to do either. But we will be able to do more of it. Aside from any personal satisfaction I derive as a confessed information-junkie catering to the insatiable curiosity of the scholar, the expanded *PD* will serve a better purpose. The *Digest* itself has made clear to me that there are as many communication gaps to be bridged *within the social sciences* as between them and the hard sciences. And much suggests that bridging them may deserve the priority. Hardly an issue of *PD* appears without one or more articles showing the confrontation of disciplines at problematic crossroads: the social and socio-

logical role of psychiatry, the potential contribution of the behavioral sciences to medicine, the sociological aspects of sociology itself, economics and education, education and politics, politics and technology, technology and the university, the university and management, management and social welfare, social welfare and research objectives.

As a layman I may be appalled by the complexity of involved problems. But as a concerned humanist, I must try to follow their interrelationships. I suspect that many of our readers need this kind of scholarly intelligence service and will find the expanded *PD* worthwhile. It is somewhat ironic that this should occur at a time when the *Intellectual Digest*, which was read by many of our American subscribers, has been discontinued. While we can't offer you the benefits of four-color art and advertising we can help in your continuing education. As a matter of fact, both Robert Hayne and myself consider the job of producing the *Press Digest* an education that is not easily matched elsewhere.

1. Garfield, E. ISI's *Press Digest* helps narrow the gap between the scientist and the layman. *Current Contents* No. 20, 16 May 1973, p. 5-6.

2. ————. How is the *ISI Press Digest* doing? *Current Contents* No. 37, 12 September 1973, p. 5-6.