

Introducing  
*Journal Citation Reports*

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Earlier this year ISI® published the *Science Citation Index*® (*SCI*® ) 1975 Annual. For the first time the *SCI* included a separate volume called *Journal Citation Reports*® (*JCR*™ ).<sup>1</sup>

The *JCR* carried this dedication: "Dedicated to the memory of the late *John Desmond Bernal* whose insight into the societal origins and impact of science inspired an interest that became a career, and to *Chauncey D. Leake*, *Joshua Lederberg*, *Robert K. Merton*, and *Derek J. DeSolla Price* whose acumen, criticism, and encouragement as scientists and friends invigorated and guided the early research that led to the publication of the *Science Citation Index* and to its use not only for information retrieval but also for the social study of science.

Reprinted below is my preface to the *JCR*, slightly modified for *CC*® readers. In addition, we have reprinted *in toto* the introduction which describes *JCR* in detail.

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The *JCR* is the product of more than ten years' research. As a matter of fact the concept of the *JCR* predates my work on citation index-

ing and the *Science Citation Index*, to which we now plan to annex the *JCR* each year. The *SCI* was planned as a 'radically different' tool for information retrieval in the natural sciences. But its methodology was constructed within a framework revealed to me with the pointed casualness but intense clarity of a great teacher. Chauncey Leake's early suggestion that I study the significance and potential usefulness of review articles and their references offered me more than I recognized at the time. Concerned as I was with the problems of information retrieval, I recognized in his suggestion--reinforced by a fortuitous contact with W.C. Adair--the beginnings of the *Science Citation Index*.

As, during the years, I and many others used the *SCI* for its planned and advertised purpose of information retrieval, I came to see that I had been advised not only to consider the meaning and usefulness of references and citations, but advised especially to consider their meaning *in a particular type of journal*. The data bank amassed over the years to produce the *SCI*

gave me a unique and unprecedented opportunity to look at references and citations not just as tools for information retrieval, but to look at them also as characteristics of the journals they linked. Using the *SCI* data bank, I began to study journals as socio-scientific phenomena as well as communications media. In that new study I began the manipulations of the data bank and the listings and relistings that have with repetition, study, continual modification and refinement, produced the *JCR*.

In the pages that follow, we are reprinting the "Introduction" to the *JCR*. In it, I tried to explain clearly what the *JCR* is, how it was compiled, how it can be used for some simple purposes for which, I think, it is certainly needed. I have tried also to suggest its usefulness in what I'll call more advanced research. If I have failed in the latter, it is because I have deliberately, and with some difficulty, restrained my own enthusiasm about the value of what some may find at first sight to be merely another handbook of data.

Let me say only that the sociology of science is a relatively new field. I believe that *JCR* will prove uniquely useful in exploring it. As students and researchers use it, I

am confident they will discover in that suggestion not a boast, but a fact. And, with great pleasure, I leave to them also to discover how the *JCR* not only answers the simpler questions they at first bring to it, but then begins to help them formulate questions that are more significant. As its author, I've naturally been pleased to find the *JCR* ready with answers. But as a student and researcher myself, the *JCR* satisfies me most because it teems with questions.

*JCR* is not, at present, all that I should like it to be. It cannot be as large as it would have to be to give users all the data on particular journals that interest them. It contains errors that have survived the considerable effort that I and others have expended to prevent them. I acknowledge these shortcomings without dissatisfaction. I can be threatened with only one disappointment: that subscribers may fail to become, like myself, enthusiastic users and researchers of the *Journal Citation Reports*. When they do become avid users, I'm sure they will express in reviews (and perhaps in letters to me) a discontent that equals my own about its necessary and its unplanned shortcomings.

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1. Garfield E. *Journal citation reports: a bibliometric analysis of references processed for the 1974 Science Citation Index*. Science Citation Index 1975 Annual, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Institute for Scientific Information® , 1976).