

PREFACE

In preparation for the writing of this preface I re-examined the many published reviews of the first two volumes of my essays. I was impressed, if not annoyed, by the frequent assertions that a considerable number of my essays had little, or nothing, to do with the information sciences. Reviewers often implied that they were pleasantly surprised by this discovery. I'm surprised at their surprise.

I understand, of course, that their expectations were conditioned by the title, *Essays of an Information Scientist*. Apparently, they assumed that an information scientist would write only about information science. I suppose such an assumption may not be entirely unwarranted, but it seems to me to be based on an unduly narrow view of a human being. We are, after all, multi-dimensional creatures in an intellectual and emotional, as well as physical, sense. The first two volumes of my essays reflect some of the intellectual and emotional dimensions that, along with information science, are found in this particular information scientist. This, the third, volume continues in the same vein.

The book contains more about science in general than it does about information science in particular. For that reason, I think any scientist, whether particularly interested in information science or not, might find much of interest. One essay deals with *Citation Classics*. This weekly feature in *Current Contents* permits authors of important scientific papers to describe in their own words why and

how they came about doing some of their most useful work. Other essays wander among such subjects as the role of style in scientific writing, a proposal for paying scientists to produce high quality reviews on a regular basis, a new way of looking at reprint requests, copyright practices, management of personal reprint files, chiropractic medicine, and the state-of-the-art of science journalism. Many of the essays of general scientific interest analyze the literature of various specialties, disciplines, and nations to uncover some insights into the orientation and structure of their research activity.

This subject of analyzing research activity through the literature it produces is one of my special interests and one of several recurrent themes running through the book. The study of science mainly through citation analysis is now called scientometrics, having evolved from bibliometrics. It is a field of study that has taken on new vitality in recent years, fueled by the development of several methods of citation analysis that have greatly increased its power and utility. Both ISI and I have played, and continue to play, a prominent role in this resurgence. Yet the field is dominated not by information scientists, but by sociologists and historians of science and by science administrators. Most of the support for this kind of research comes from people concerned with science policy and the administration of large science programs. These people, plus the historians and sociologists, will find a continuing record of citation analysis studies, with fat bibliographies, in this volume.

Another recurring theme in this volume has to do with the editorial practices of scientific journals. As the head of a company that produces "secondary" indexing and other information services, I have a natural interest in such things as journal design, publication schedules, and editorial conventions. As a scientist with a penchant for communication, these interests extend into matters of editorial style, the economics of publishing, and the individual and collective roles played by journals. Journal editors and others interested in scientific communication will find essays on all those subjects. Many

of the citation analyses reprinted here have to do with my efforts to clearly define parts of the network of journals that serve the international scientific community.

Some of the essays are unabashedly personal. I have had the good fortune to become friends with some very special people. Some are towering figures in the world of science. Others have no scientific credentials, but are people who have won my love or respect with other strengths. Periodically, I am moved to document one of these friendships, to publicly acknowledge the way in which that person has enriched my life. Several of those acknowledgements are reprinted here.

I don't mean to imply by this discourse that I'm an information scientist who writes about everything but information science. The expectations raised in the hearts of reviewers, and maybe readers, by the title of *Essays of an Information Scientist* are at least partially fulfilled. There is more than enough on information science to keep professionals from that field from feeling the least bit slighted. Though my interests may be considered eclectic, the perspective of an information scientist lies at the core of them.

The point that I have been laboring, perhaps too hard, to make is that while this volume, as the preceding ones, reflects the perspective of an information scientist, it also reflects the interests of a person who is involved with and concerned about much more of the total scope of scientific and human activity than information science circumscribes. The result is a potpourri of essays that just won't fit very neatly into any single subject classification. About the best I can do in the way of producing a general characterization of this book is to say that it contains some of the observations and concerns that one scientist thinks he may share with others.

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