

Current Comments

Introducing ISI's Quarterly Index to Current Contents/Life Sciences (QUICC/LS)

Number 50

December 10, 1979

In 1980 ISI® will launch the *Quarterly Index to Current Contents®/Life Sciences (QUICC™/LS)*. This is a significant event for scientists who use *Current Contents® (CC®)* regularly to keep up-to-date. It will add to *CC* a retrospective search capability. *QUICC/LS* will rival the importance and timeliness of on-line searching. For librarians and information scientists *QUICC/LS* is, in my opinion, a breakthrough. It is the first tool that provides current *subject* access to the biomedical literature. As such it will often be the preferred search tool to the *Index Medicus*. These are admittedly large claims, but they are easily substantiated.

CC readers are already aware of its value as a current awareness tool. But if keeping up were the only use for *CC*, one would expect subscribers to discard their copies after a few weeks. However, a survey we conducted in 1975-76 showed that subscribers to *CC*, both individuals and libraries, keep *CC* for an average of two years! In fact, our survey showed that over 40% of subscribers use *CC* for short-term retrospective searches. This can vary from a search of the last few issues all the way to a search covering six months or even a year.

I've thought about doing a subject index to *CC/Life Sciences* ever since it began in 1957. When we introduced the *Weekly Subject Index (WSI)* in 1971, it was a major breakthrough in bibliographic timeliness.¹ Now after eight years we take *WSI* for granted, forgetting that there is not a single other bibliographic tool that can claim such timeliness. It is in fact more timely than most on-line services which are normally up-dated on a monthly basis.

There was little doubt that a cumulation of *WSI* was needed. The key concern was how often it should be produced. In order to keep the cost within reach of most libraries and individuals we decided on a quarterly. *QUICC/LS* will be a soft-bound index published as a separate supplement to *CC/Life Sciences*. Subscriptions to *QUICC/LS* are optional and cost \$100 per year.

Each issue of *QUICC/LS* will cover 13 weekly issues of *CC/Life Sciences*. It will provide access to everything published in *CC*—journal articles and journal issues, book titles as well as chapter titles, Press Digest, Current Comments®, and Citation Classics.

QUICC/LS will contain three indexes—author, subject, and jour-

nal. These indexes will lead researchers to a *CC* issue and page number, and a journal page number. The journal index will replace the triannual journal index which now appears in *CC/Life Sciences*. The space now used for these indexes in *CC* will be used to cover additional journal and book material.

The author index in *QUICC/LS* will be improved significantly. The author-address directory which appears in each weekly issue of *CC* is designed primarily to help readers obtain reprints. For this reason only the first authors are included. The author index in *QUICC/LS* is designed to help readers locate articles published by all authors during the time covered. For this reason, coauthors as well as first authors (but not addresses) are listed. If you are looking for an address, an arrow beside an entry in the author index will tell you that the author's address appears in the *CC* issue indicated. A sample of the author index appears in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Example of all-author index in *QUICC/LS*. Arrows indicate an author whose address appears in *CC*.

	CC NO	CC PG	JOUR PG
HAUPT H	1	42	197
HAURY G ◀	3	28	281
HAUS E	1	36	175
HAUSE R	1	59	1988
HAUSER K ◀	2	74	329
HAUSLER WJ	4	64	492
HAUSMANOWAP I	3	72	487
HAUW JJ	3	29	959
HAVELKA UD	2	32	165
HAVEMANN U ◀	1	41	355
HAVERNEN A	4	52	1907
HAVLICEK V	3	43	361

The *Weekly Subject Index* used in *CC* is a title-word index. It is undoubtedly quite useful as a weekly indexing tool.² However, a quarterly cumulation emphasizes *WSI*'s limitations. While you might find one or two entries under a term like "neomycin" in a single issue of *CC*, you would probably find 25 or more articles in *WSI* covering a three-month period. The value of a single indexing term is lowered when so many papers are involved.

The traditional solution to this problem, as exemplified by *Index Chemicus*[®], *Chemical Abstracts*, or *Biological Abstracts*, is to create modifying phrases. An "automatic" approach to this problem was developed in the KWIC index. In this approach, as many as 60 letters of the title were displayed along with each key word. I've never felt comfortable with KWIC indexes, however, because they are uneconomical to produce and difficult to use. We were well aware of the limitations of KWIC indexing when we developed the Permuterm[®] Subject Index (PSI) for the *Science Citation Index*[®].³

For the same reasons we decided that a PSI should be the subject index in *QUICC/LS*. Like *WSI*, PSI creates an index entry for every significant title word. But PSI goes a step further. Beneath each primary entry is a list of all other significant words which appear with the primary term in a title. The user can thus search on two terms instead of one, saving time and effort. A few sample listings from PSI, as they would appear in *QUICC/LS*, are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Example of Permuterm' Subject Index to be used in QUICC™/LS subject index.

		CC NO	CC PG	ARTL PG	
Primary Terms (These words appeared in the title of one or more articles or book chapters.)	MONKEY				Starting page number on contents page of item with the words "monkey" and "behavior" in its title.
	BEHAVIOR	4	85	23	
	DAYLIGHT	3	116	133	
	DOG	3	116	133	
	INHIBITION	3	116	133	
	MUTAGEN	4	125	5	
	MYCOSIS- FUNGOIDES				
	CHROMOSOME	3	27	16	
	DIGITAL	4	108	57	
	EVALUATION	4	108	57	
"sa" means "see also"	NH3				Starting page number in CC/LS of a contents page which includes an item with the word "mutagen" in its title.
	sa AMMONIA				
	ACTION	3	49	10	
	AQUA	4	229	630	
	EFFECTS	4	PD	630	
Co-terms (These words appeared with "NH3" in titles.)	LASER	3	49	10	CC/LS issue number for an item with the words "action" and "NH3" in its title.
					This item appears in the "Press Digest" section of CC/LS.

We believe that QUICC/LS will be useful to both library and individual subscribers to CC/LS. For example, it will be especially useful to the librarian who is asked to find a recent article by a patron with fragmentary knowledge of its title.

As in the past, our experiment with CC/LS will be a prelude to QUICC indexes for the other CC editions. I would hope that by 1981 we will be ready to cover CC/Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences.

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3., The Permuterm Subject Index: an autobiographical review. *J. Amer. Soc. Inform. Sci.* 27(5/6):288-91, 1976.

*Reprinted in: Garfield E. *Essays of an information scientist*. Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1977, 2 v.