

Current Comments®

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Introducing *The Scientist*: At Last, a Newspaper for the Science Professional

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For the past 25 years I've nurtured the dream of publishing the first newspaper for scientists. Now that dream is becoming a reality. *The Scientist*™—the name of our paper—will begin publication this fall. With its appearance science professionals will at long last have a newspaper that addresses their unique interests and concerns. In the coming weeks and months you'll be hearing more about *The Scientist*, both in the pages of *Current Contents*® (CC®) and in the general press. But for now let me give you an overview of what *The Scientist* will cover. I hope you will share my enthusiasm for one of the most exciting ventures ISI® has ever undertaken.

Why do we think this venture is exciting? *The Scientist* is something new to the world of science publications. We will not publish original research papers in the manner of *Science*, *Nature*, and a host of other scientific journals. Nor will we attempt to describe the content of science for other scientists in the tradition of *Scientific American* and *New Scientist*. And we will not attempt to bring science to the general public—the audience of magazines such as *Science 86*, *Discover*, and *OMNI*. *The Scientist* will be about the business of science: those matters that are relevant to professionals working in the scientific arena—bench scientists, professors of science, science administrators, and laypersons who formulate or monitor science policy.

For far too long there has been no forum for science professionals, no medi-

um in which to voice their special concerns or to follow important developments affecting their activities. Frankly, I'm surprised that others have not attempted to fill this void. Almost every other profession is supported by one or more newspapers—trade papers as they are called—such as *American Lawyer*, *Medical Tribune*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. While newsletters of professional societies do provide excellent coverage for their particular constituencies, *The Scientist* will cover, in its own unique and lively style, the full range of the practical aspects of science. Business professionals rely on the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, and similar publications for the news they need. I believe that science professionals will come to depend on *The Scientist* for the news they need.

The Scientist will cover the great national and international debates over science, technology, and energy policies, biomedical ethics, and politics affecting the work of scientists. We will track important legislation concerning support of scientific agencies and research. We'll keep close watch on the regulation of science, country by country. Our editors and writers will bring to scientists' attention information relevant to their work and careers that appears in government reports and other publications often not seen by busy researchers. We will also reflect the analyses and insights, where pertinent to professional life, that come from disciplines such as philosophy,

sociology, and the history of science, as well as public opinion on the conduct of science.

One of our most important concerns will be the economics of science—the availability of research funding, how scientists get their support, what areas are receiving the most support or are likely to receive it in the future, and the constant budget battles in governments, here and abroad, over public funding of basic research. We will identify political and social developments likely to affect support for science in the future.

You may be particularly interested in our coverage of the salaries and compensation of scientists, an ambitious long-range study of what US science professionals earn, including how much they receive from consulting and other outside activities, their perks, and their benefit packages. Expect to see the results of our first study in early issues of *The Scientist*. You may be pleased or angered by these numbers, but for the first time you will have an up-to-date, authoritative source to compare how your livelihood stacks up against that of your peers. We'll also be discussing compensation abroad.

The Scientist will carry profiles of scientists in the news and of appointees to key positions in the science world. We'll publish lively first-person accounts of the process of scientific discovery, based in part on the important papers we feature in the *Citation Classics*[®] section of *CC*.

The editors will draw upon ISI's extensive and unique information resources. Our *ISI Atlas of Science*[®] staff will contribute graphic and bibliographic data on hot research topics they have identified by monitoring research fronts. We plan to adapt and expand the *Press Digest* feature of *CC* and *Current Controversy* to the special requirements of science professionals. We'll explore the uses and abuses of citation analysis as a tool for tracking the progress of science. With the expertise and assistance of ISI's

staff and outside experts, we intend to expand the scope of many subjects covered in *Current Comments*[®]. I also expect to editorialize on a broad range of topics related to science policy and practice.

The Scientist will above all include a lively Opinion section. As an extension of the op-ed page common to most newspapers, our Opinion section will be an open forum for scientists and science policymakers to speak out on the many and wide-ranging issues that concern them. If you have something to say to your colleagues, let us hear from you. I expect that this part of the paper will make for especially stimulating reading and that the tone of submissions will vary from earnest to irreverent.

After the publication of our premier issue in the fall, now targeted for October, *The Scientist* will appear again in November and December. Beginning in January 1987, it will be published every two weeks. We're taking advantage of the recent revolution in computerized printing and graphics design to create a lively and colorful tabloid newspaper, filled with charts, graphs, photographs, and drawings. These visual aids and the readable, concise copy of *The Scientist* will stand out in sharp contrast to the heavy material you wade through each day. We want *The Scientist* to be "must reading," but in a form that you enjoy.

Why publish a newspaper rather than a magazine or journal? Without a lengthy dissertation on the economics of mass distribution, I'll simply say that the newspaper format and tabloid size make for the fastest and most cost-effective delivery of the news we'll cover. This format best serves the interests of readers and advertisers alike. As *The Scientist* finds its niche in the ecology of scientific communications, I am optimistic that my dream of weekly, twice-weekly, or even daily publication will be realized. Of course, it's up to you—the readers and the advertisers. Both are essential to the success of this venture.

The initial readership of *The Scientist* is primarily the audience of *CC*. Since we know that the average copy of *CC* finds its way into the hands of 10 or more readers, we expect that each *CC* subscriber will want extra copies of *The Scientist*

scientific and technological advances. Consider for a moment science and technology as a worldwide enterprise and the resources allocated to it. On a national scale it is a huge part of the gross national product. Slowly but surely the general

Figure 1: Representation of a front page of *The Scientist*TM.



for these pass-along readers, lab partners, graduate students, and others. In this way, we will be able to bring you this newspaper at a very low cost. Revenues from advertisers, whose requirements for space and color could not be satisfied in *CC* but now will be met in *The Scientist*, will support a great part of the newspaper's expenses.

Science affects everyone, increasingly so in a world driven more every day by

press has recognized these facts. The appearance of a science section in the *New York Times* and other newspapers bears witness to this realization. But the reporting of science, and especially of the business of science, cannot and should not be left solely to media that cater to nonscientists.

This week's essay is a little shorter than usual. My descriptive powers cannot do justice to *The Scientist*. The real-

ity is worth 50,000 words—that's about what you'll get in a 32-page issue. For the time being, take a glance at a dummy of the paper's front page (Figure 1). One day *The Scientist* will have its online counterpart, but for now the print medium prevails. I think that even the most ardent computer enthusiast appreciates the portable, tangible newspaper format.

The Scientist follows in the democratic tradition of the public exchange of

scientific ideas. In that spirit, we are looking for your ideas; send them to the editor of *The Scientist*, Tabitha Powledge, at the main editorial office in Washington, DC. We are also looking for your subscriptions, which we are ready to receive here in Philadelphia at IST's headquarters. Our classified and display advertising sales and circulation office is in New York. Whichever office you contact, we are at your service. Welcome to the world of *The Scientist*.

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