

July 14, 1971

“Our new book on Cyclic AMP could hardly have been written without the help of ASCA.”¹ “We should also like to express our gratitude to Dr. Eugene Garfield and his colleagues at the Institute for Scientific Information. Without the help of the modern information services provided by this organization, a monograph of this type, attempting complete coverage of a rapidly expanding field of research, would be almost impossible.”²

Cyclic adenosine monophosphate is one of two mononucleotides known to occur in nature. During the past seven years it has been the subject of rapidly expanding multidisciplinary research. Of the 1525 references in Robison's book more than 50% appeared in 1968 or later.

I have previously attempted to describe the effectiveness of ASCA.³⁻⁶ Studies by others have also touched on it.⁷⁻¹⁰ But only a small number of the many thousands who use ASCA have publicly acknowledged its role in their work.

ASCA is ISI's *Automatic Subject Citation Alert*. It provides each subscriber, on a weekly basis, information on currently published articles relevant to his interest. Especially important, as with cyclic AMP, ASCA scans not only the current literature of one or two disciplines, but the literature of more than 2000 journals across the whole

field of science. This capability for current retrieval should recommend ASCA to anyone seriously interested in thorough, in-depth, coverage of a topic. Perhaps even greater recommendation exists in the unique multiplicity of “access points” which ASCA offers the user to effect the retrieval of material he needs. As “access points” the user is not restricted to one or more subject headings or descriptors, which—no matter how good the list or thesaurus from which they're drawn—rarely describe a user's interest as *he would like to describe it*. ASCA permits him to outline his interest in the way he actually thinks of it, in terms not only of subject but of men working in the field, of significant publications, even of a core journal collection from which he can expect a high percentage of relevant papers.

In describing their interests, few users will construct a retrieval profile identical with that of another user. Each separate interest profile is a unique description of some object of scientific research. But there are some topics in which many of us share similar interests, as e.g., air pollution, drug abuse, viruses in cancer, information storage and retrieval, alcoholism, etc. Having recognized this, ISI has a new service called *ASCATOPICS*. We have identified important topics of concern to large segments of the sci-

entific community and developed general interest profiles to cover each topic. Consequently, *ASCATOPICS* are available at rates far less than if you were to request them on an individual basis. You've possibly seen the list in

ads appearing in this and other issues of *CC*[®]. If this list is not adequate to your needs why not suggest an *ASCATOPIC* to us by writing ISI at the usual address: 325 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106.

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