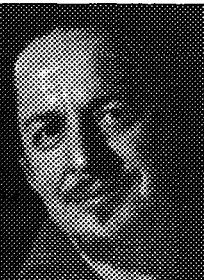


The Who and Why of ISI.



January 6, 1975

Number 1

I am continually disappointed that many people, even subscribers, are uninformed or misinformed about ISI®'s identity and goals. This is especially true abroad, but it is also true here at home. Often at first meeting, either in personal contact or in correspondence, it is obvious that ideas held about ISI are incorrect. Some of these ideas lead to unjustified complaints about ISI's services and products.

As a kind of New Year's resolution, we are devoting a few pages in this issue to correcting those ideas.

We often receive letters which are based on the assumption that ISI is a government or government-supported agency. Many readers assume that ISI has a legislated mandate to index every journal published. They also assume that our budget is supplied or augmented by the United States Treasury to enable us to do so. It is an understandable mistake. Since the government underwrites a number of information organizations, many people believe ISI is similarly financed.

ISI is neither governmental, like the National Library of Medicine, nor is it government-subsidized,

like the information arms of various non-profit organizations, many of them actual subsidiaries of scientific societies.

ISI is a privately operated company without public or private subsidy of any kind. We believe that is the best and most economical way to serve the scientific community. We sell our services, and we must sooner or later cover our costs. Thus, we are required to meet real subscriber needs. We wouldn't last very long if we didn't.

Some years ago, we prepared an article originally titled, like this editorial, *The Who and Why of ISI*.¹ It had two intended audiences, potential subscribers and potential employees. We needed something that would describe the company and its products and services more fully than any of us could at certain times--in the often bustling atmosphere of scientific meetings, for example, or in the tense atmosphere of a personnel office. We then reprinted the article as a brochure.

The brochure is long outdated, and we haven't yet prepared another to take its place. However on pages R1-R8 of this issue we are

reprinting an article about ISI that we hope will serve the purpose temporarily.² The article tells about ISI's activities and our unique role in the recent history of documentation and information science.

My name appears frequently in the article, but ego-gratification is not a purpose of the reprinting. I am surrounded every day by the activity of ISI. My ego is gratified by evidence of ISI's accomplishments, and in like measure it suffers from indications of what remains to be done.

The article reprinted here was written by Samuel Lazerow, now ISI's Vice President for Administrative and Library Services. Mr. Lazerow needs no introduction to most of the international library and information science communities. He is the only man who has held

top-level administrative posts in each of the three national libraries of the United States--the National Agricultural Library, the National Library of Medicine, and the Library of Congress. However, those readers who don't know him may wish to refer to a short review of his career which appeared in this space a while ago.³

1. Garfield, E. ISI eases scientists' information problems; provides convenient orderly access to literature. *Karger Gazette* No. 13, 5 March 1966, p. 2; reprinted as: The Who and Why of ISI, *Current Contents*® No. 12, 25 March 1969, pp. 5-6.

2. Lazerow, S. "Institute for Scientific Information." In: *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, ed. by A. Kent, H. Lancour, J.E. Daily, & W.Z. Nasri. (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1974). Vol. 12, pp. 89-97.

3. Garfield, E. Introducing Samuel Lazerow, ISI's Vice President for Administration. *Current Contents* No. 44, 1 November 1972, pp. 5-6.