

Problems of Publishing

The problems of plagiarism and multiple publication of the same data, discussed by William J. Broad (News and Comment, 13 Mar., p. 1137), might be reduced by using on-line literature search services available in many libraries. "The use of on-line services by editors is astonishingly low," according to Garfield (1).

Literature search output sent along with the manuscript to the reviewer also might raise questions as to why relevant works, especially non-English materials, were not cited. Authors might better realize the risks of redundant research and multiple publication if a journal's "Information to Contributors" carried a statement that computer-based literature searches would be conducted as part of the editing and reviewing process.

Because of the delay between journal publication and article inclusion in computerized services, not all cases of publishing fraud and unnecessary multiple publications would be eliminated, but some like those described in *Science* (2) might not happen.

Perhaps we should be even more concerned about the disruptions in informal scientific communications that are taking place. Scientists are becoming less willing to share prepublication information because of possible commercial applications, according to Stanford University President Donald Kennedy (3). Other scientists fear manuscript rejection if the news media have published summaries of their research presented at meetings (4). If established scientists can conduct fee-based workshops or serve as consultants, they may not publish research results in journals that pay nothing or even ask for page charges. Young investigators and students are affected by the "buttoned-lip syndrome" as well as by fragmented publications and multiple publication of the same data. Society stands to lose if information from public-sponsored research is not available.

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References

1. E. Garfield, in *Scientific Information Transfer: The Editor's Role*, M. Balaban, Ed. (Reidel, Boston, 1978).
2. W. J. Broad, *Science* **208**, 1438 (1980); *ibid.* **210**, 38 (1980); *ibid.*, p. 171.
3. A. C. Roark, *Chron. High Educ.* **21**, 1 (6 January 1981).
4. G. McBride, *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* **245**, 374 (1981); L. Grouse, *ibid.*, p. 375; N. Wade, *Science* **211**, 561 (1981).

Social Science Budget Cuts

Constance Holden (News and Comment, 27 Mar., p. 1397) notes that the Reagan Administration views the social and behavioral sciences with distrust and suspicion. Among all the disciplines, these were singled out for ravaging cuts in funding—cuts so sudden and large that research may be crippled for many years.

A very different view of one of the social sciences in America is held by P. N. Shikhirev, a senior member of the Moscow Institute of Psychology, who writes as follows (1) on current social psychology in the United States:

Social psychology has enjoyed a special status among the ruling classes of capitalist countries in recent years. Thus government institutions and organizations in the [United States] spend about half a million dollars on psychosocial research each year, and more than 8 million students take courses in psychology dominated by the problems of social psychology. . . .

The [United States] plays the dominant role among capitalist countries in relation to social psychology. There are fully objective reasons for this, explained by the acute demand this largest capitalist country has for knowledge in social psychology. Such reasons include aggravation of class, ethnic, and other social conflicts, growth in the role of the human factor in the scientific-technical revolution, and a number of others. There is tremendous significance to the social order or ruling classes, which are trying with all of their effort to hold onto their position, to arrive at and optimize, through psychological resources, effective operation of the production sphere and the entire sociopolitical system of the society, and to utilize all possibilities to maintain the status quo. The data of social psychology are acquiring great and ever-increasing significance to the conduct of effective domestic and foreign political propaganda. This circumstance is extremely important considering the acute ideological struggle occurring between the world's two sociopolitical systems. . . .

The tremendous amount of experience acquired, the abundance of procedures and techniques, the use of the latest achievements of data recording and processing technology, and the high level of scientific research have all made American social psychology the standard for the world for a long period of time.

Obviously, the Soviets regard social psychology as one of our most effective defensive weapons. Instead of reducing its funding, therefore, the Administration would do well to transfer the entire support of social psychology to the Department of Defense.

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References

1. P. N. Shikhirev, *Sovremennaya Sotsial'naya Psikhologiya SShA* (Moscow Institute of Psychology, Moscow, 1979), p. 228.

I read with great amusement Constance Holden's "Dark days for social research." In boldface print she underscores Philip Handler's loud complaint that "These cuts are being dictated by social philosophy and are not just budget cuts." She goes on to quote others such as Harvard's Zvi Griliches and Stanford's Mordecai Kurz who respectively described the budget cuts as "... [based on] vindictiveness, ignorance, and arrogance" as well as "scientific prejudice [bordering on] dangerous dogma."

Does anyone remember any social scientist who *ever* complained when his or her funding was based on social philosophy, back in those lush days of the New Frontier and the Great Society? I don't. Did any social scientist *ever* suggest that the government was ignorant, arrogant, or even dangerously dogmatic when it poured money into the research of social scientists who never tired of telling us that redistribution of wealth would cure social injustice, disease, illiteracy, and crime? I can't remember any who complained.

The social sciences are in hot water today because they were too willing to serve politically expedient philosophies yesterday. They took the money and ran, without caring one whit about the ultimate consequences. They squandered lavish sums on social welfare programs which were not only responsible in part for the economic woes of today, but also had a hand in causing many of our present technological shortcomings, having diverted huge sums from R & D in the so-called "hard sciences." But now that the philosophy has changed perceptibly they cry foul. This is not only illogical; it is ridiculous.

The social scientists have been hoisted by their own petard. And to my way of thinking, whenever a special interest lobby tries to thwart the will of the electorate in a democracy, that is indeed dangerously dogmatic, vindictive, ignorant, and supremely arrogant.

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Erratum: An article about beryllium, authored by David Bayliss and others, appeared in the February 1980 issue of *Environmental Research*, not the *Journal of Environmental Health*, as incorrectly reported in News and Comment (6 Feb., p. 556).

Erratum: In a quote from testimony before a congressional subcommittee by Harvard economist Zvi Griliches (News and Comment, 27 Mar., p. 1397), three words were inadvertently omitted. Referring to federal budget-makers and their macroeconomic policy, Griliches said, "... and they do not even want to know how to measure its effect. . . ."

Erratum: In the article "Electron microscope center opens at Berkeley" (Research News, 27 Mar., p. 1407), reference is made to the 1.2-MeV (million electron volts) high voltage electron microscope at the State University of New York at Albany. That instrument is owned by the state of New York and operated and supported by the New York State Department of Health, not by the National Institutes of Health.