June 1991

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Recommended Citation

Markwith, Mike and Strauch, Katina (1991) "Bet You Missed It," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 3: Iss. 3, Article 7.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1083>

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Bet You Missed It

Compiled by **Mike Markwith** (The Faxon Company) and
Katina Strauch (College of Charleston)

The Top Chemistry Journals According to *The Scientist* [Abstract of "The Highest-Impact, Highest-Influence Chemistry Journals" by Abigail Grissom, page 14, April 1st Issue of *The Scientist* 5, (7)]

In the decade of the 80s the proliferation of new journals coupled with the rising costs of journals in chemistry has been a thorn in the side of many fiscally constrained institutions. In this competitive environment, it is not always possible to know what journals are essential and which are more likely to be of only limited utility. The analysis of general topic chemistry journals by *The Scientist* should help to identify at least some of the "must" have "high-impact" journals. The annual ratings are based on average citation rates of articles that appeared in a journal for the two years following publication. [1989 journal rank = (# citations in 1989 of 1988/87 articles)/(# papers published in 1988/87)].

So what are the hottest journals? The two biggest winners were dedicated to publishing reviews and comprehensive reports: #1 *Chemical Reviews* and #2 *Accounts of Chemical Research*. Both are published by the American Chemical Society. What are the hottest papers on original research? *Angewandte Chemie - International Edition in English*, (#3 in 1989), *Journal of the American Chemical Society* (#4 in 1989), and *Journal of the Chemical Society - Chemical Communication* (#8 in 1989) were listed as consistent high impact journals in the 80s. Two of the newer journals have had a surprising impact in the 80s: *Journal of Computational Chemistry* (#9 in 1989, 1st published in 1980) and *Research on Chemical Intermediates* (#10 in 1989, 1st published in 1978). Multilingual journals, such as *Chemische Berichte*, *Helvetica Chimica Acta*, and the *New Journal of Chemistry* have slipped in impact over the past decade, not making the top ten in 1989. The other stars in the 1989 listing include *Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data* (#5), *Chemical Society Reviews* (#6); and *Topics in Current Chemistry* (#7). Many chemists might be surprised to learn that a

library standard of interdisciplinary chemical research, *Pure and Applied Chemistry*, did not make the top ten list in 1989, 1988, or 1980.

This, despite the current clamor of excitement in academical, government, and industry over the importance of the interdisciplinary approach to science.

—**Rick Heldrich** (College of Charleston)

Are Professors Perishing? // "In Two Years, A Million Refereed Articles, 300,000 Books, Chapters, Monographs," by Carolyn J. Mooney in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, for May 22, 1991, p.A17.

Citing unpublished Education Department data from a 1988 survey, the author makes the perhaps self-evident statement that professors at research universities appear in little danger of perishing. "Each of the nation's estimated 489,000 full-time faculty members produced an average of two refereed journal articles and 0.6 scholarly books . . . during the previous two years." At research and doctoral institutions, and again this is probably obvious, the proportion of faculty publishing refereed articles, (the health sciences has led the way, chapters in edited volumes, monographs and textbooks was higher than at other four-year institutions.

Reference is also made to an article published in *Science* in December of 1990 which examined how frequently scientific literature indexed by the Institute for Scientific Information had been cited in the five years following its publication. One conclusion was that 55% remained uncited. In fairness, in a later clarification of this and data used from other studies, the percent drops quite drastically. An ISI research analyst, however, is quoted as saying that "there's an underlying feeling that much of what is published is worthless."

—**Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

Is Quality Perishing? // "Many Academics are Backing Efforts to Cut Down on 'Trivial' Scholarships," by Carolyn J. Mooney in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 22, 1991, p. A1, A13, A16.

As the author notes, the "publish or perish" conflict is not a new one. It has, however, taken on a greater urgency recently as criticism of undergraduate education has increased. Scholars and scientific journal editors interviewed by Ms. Mooney were in favor of "New efforts to emphasize quality over quantity in a faculty-reward system . . ."

Reference is made to a nationwide survey conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1989 in which 42% of professors at research universities felt that on their campuses "publications were merely counted, (in the tenure process) not evaluated for quality." Another comment was made that for tenure a book is needed, and not necessarily a good one. It was made clear, however, that in a culture that places such a premium on "quality of publication" those who would like to make changes will likely encounter stiff resistance.

—**Phil Dankert** (Cornell University)

The Midas Touch // "The Buying Dutchman: Restructured and Highly Profitable, Holland's Elsevier Goes Shopping," by Sharon Reier in *Financial Weekly* for April 16, 1991, pages 50-51.

This article was sent in courtesy of John Schmitt (Colorado State University) and is incredibly interesting. It's about Professor Pierre Vinken, chairman and CEO of the famous and much mentioned Elsevier. I tell you, this is a man I

would like to give my (measly) money to for management and growth! "Over the past decade, Vinken has transformed a stodgy Dutch publishing and printing firm into one of the most profitable media companies in the world. In 1989, Elsevier's 16% net margins were the highest in European publishing." All of this is because of management according to "Luykx's (an old Elsevier board member) Law" which consists of publishing highly specialized material which enjoys a higher profit margin and is "less sensitive to economic and advertising downturns. We like to say we are in the need to know, as opposed to the nice to know business," says Cor Brakel, once finance director at Elsevier now with Wolters Kluwer, a company which has supposedly taken on some of Vinken's and Elsevier's "hard ball" tactics, causing their operating margins to climb. Recently, Wolters Kluwer even bought Lippincott, the medical publisher. Vinken, who apparently trained as a professor of medicine, is described as "intellectually intimidating in manner." Like all successful people, Vinken seems to have his share of detractors, many of whom are journalists. Vinken may not have been as successful as he wanted in his attempted buyout of Kluwer several years ago, but he made a profit (of about \$140 million) when he sold off Elsevier's 33% stake in Wolters Kluwer in November. The article speculates as to whether or not Vinken may now "be able to afford a decent-size U.S. media property." Was this Pergamon or is there more to come?

Katina Strauch
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EDP and GB = Peer Review?? "Electronic Data Publishing and GenBank," by Michael J. Cinkosky, James W. Fickett, Paul Gilna, and Christian Burks in *Science* for May 31, 1991 (vol.252), pages 1273-1277.

Okay, this is what we have all been talking about. Listen to this abstract. "GenBank, the national repository for nucleotide sequence data, has implemented a new model of scientific data management, which we term electronic data publishing. In traditional publishing, both scientific conclusions and supporting data are communicated via the printed page, and in electronic journal publishing, both

types of information are communicated via electronic media. In electronic data publishing, by contrast, conclusions are published in a journal while data are published via a network accessible, electronic database." The authors are scientists. In the discussion at the end of the article, they raise questions related to electronic journal publishing and GenBank with which we must all grapple — peer review, quality of data, academic credit for this type of publication. What is especially interesting to those of us who still love books and printed information is the fact that this electronic data publishing model works hand in hand with traditional publishing models to make an impact on the publication of scientific data and information.

Rick Heldrich
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Books worth reading —
Buying Serials by Buzzy Basch and Judy McQueen. 1990.
Cost-Effective Technical Services: How to Track, Manage, and Justify Internal Operations. Edited by Gary Pitkin. 1989.
Also worth a read —
"A Cost-per-Use Method for Evaluating the Cost-Effectiveness of Serials: A Detailed Discussion of Methodology," by Dorothy Milne and Bill Tiffany, to be published in *Serials Review*, v. 17, no. 2 for summer, 1991.

Limestone Paper (Abstracted from "Precipitated Calcium Carbonate Finds Growing Niche in Paper Market" by Marc S. Reisch, *Chemical & Engineering News*, April 29, 1991, pages 9-11).

Paper has come a long way since its introduction in ancient Egypt as a papyrus plant product. The paper we use today was first introduced in 1867 by a U.S. invention that used acid to separate wood fibers so wood pulp could be used to make paper. Acid is also used to bleach, size and fill paper. 75% of the paper used today is derived from wood pulp paper. The good news is that acid free paper is rapidly, and quietly, entering the market. The acid free paper is

not only longer lasting, it is also less expensive to produce!

How is this being done? Surprisingly enough, Pfizer, a leading pharmaceutical company, is leading the way. Pfizer has supplied paper manufacturers with a basic filler, calcium carbonate. Calcium carbonate is the major constituent of limestone. The calcium carbonate is processed by Pfizer at satellite plants in the paper mills. The limestone paper will not yellow within 30-40 years and is said to last for a minimum of 300 years, but of course the "acid" test of actually lasting 300 years has not yet been demonstrated.

Why is limestone paper less expensive? In part, because the calcium carbonate is produced on site, the calcium carbonate is less expensive than the woody filler and titanium dioxide brighter it replaces, the use of calcium carbonate requires less energy, and the process using calcium carbonate appears to be less corrosive for the equipment. Just in terms of the cost of raw materials, the calcium carbonate made on site costs less than the \$200 - \$500 a ton, as compared to the \$600 - \$800 per ton cost for wood fiber filler and \$2000 per ton cost of titanium dioxide. Further, the filler content of acid paper can only reach 10-11% whereas the filler (calcium carbonate) content of the new paper can be as high as 25% before paper strength declines.

While paper manufacturers are driven by profit, paper users benefit by getting longer lasting products. In February 1988, Connecticut called for alkaline paper (like limestone paper) to be used for all state publications and records. In 1989 the NYC Public Library called for all first printing of books to be done on acid-free, or alkaline paper.

Of course, librarians and archivists recognize the need for acid free paper. In 1984, 25% of the Library of Congress collection, that's 3 million volumes, were too brittle to be circulated. Now, 97% of the Library's law and general book collection is on acid free paper. By 1991, at least 75% of all fine paper, including print paper, will be prepared by an alkaline process.

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