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The ISI and the CTW

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Most readers of this journal are probably aware of the Science Citation Index. This started as a useful tool for researchers and was developed mainly due to the inspiration and efforts of Eugene Garfield, who in 1962 founded the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI).

Many of us have undoubtedly used the Science Citation Index which, especially in the days before the web became the universal reservoir of knowledge, was the most efficient, if not the only, way of finding out what had been done in a given field of research. Even today, the ISI index remains a valuable tool. Unfortunately, it has become a tool not only for researchers, but also for administrators.

While researchers use it to find out what others have been doing, administrators use it as a way of quantifying scientific quality. In most academic institutions, continued employment or promotion through the academic ranks requires an assessment of merit. This is not least the case in places where tenure is an essential step on the way. Academic merit is often assessed by means of peer reviews, but such assessments are both lengthy and costly. It would obviously be more convenient if a simple measure of quality was available. In many places this measure is the number of publications in recognised scientific journals. Ay, there's the rub.

The logic seems to run as follows: Recognised journals are those that are included in the Science Citation Index (perhaps because the ISI index makes the administrators' life easier?). Young researchers are therefore recommended to publish only in those journals. This, however, creates a self-reinforcing tendency that works against journals not included in the ISI in-

dex, in the style of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. If researchers are discouraged—or even outright forbidden—to publish in other journals, these journals have little chance of ever becoming recognised, at least in the above meaning of the term.

The reason for making these comments is that the CTW finds itself in an uneasy position. On the one hand the journal has now been published for 5 years, and enjoys—we believe—a considerable respect in the field. On the other hand the journal is not in the ISI index, and the editors know of several cases where authors have not been allowed by their administration to submit papers. The CTW has obviously, through the publisher, applied to the ISI to be added to their list. Despite fulfilling the criteria listed on the ISI website, we have been told that it may take a year before a decision is made. In order to possibly speed up the process, the editors have been asked by the ISI to justify and explain why CTW is better than the journal that currently is ranked in the lowest position (in the relevant category of science). Needless to say, we have refused to do that, and consider even to be asked such a thing a disreputable request.

The fact nevertheless remains that the ISI, which now is a business unit in the Thomson Corporation, has established a self-appointed monopoly, which many university administrators unfortunately willingly seem to tolerate. The editors will, of course, continue to work for the CTW to be included in the ISI index. This we do because the conditions force us to, and because it may be valuable for prospective authors, but not because we in any way recognise the legitimacy of the *de facto* monopoly. Hopefully the monopoly will not last for ever. The rapid development of information technology, widespread electronic publishing, and powerful search engines will probably soon make the ISI index an anachronism. This does not mean that the vision of Eugene Garfield is wrong or outdated, but only that it can now be realised in a more effective and more egalitarian way.

And now for something entirely different. During the ninth conference on cognitive science approaches to

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process control (CSAPC), which in the fall of 2003 took place at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, the conference organisers provided the participants with a pleasant surprise—in addition to a well-organised conference, of course. During the conference dinner, Johan Hoorn and Gerrit van der Veer performed a *process polyphonia*, comprising ten poems on process control in human-machine systems garnished with three pieces of music composed around the theme EACE. Since the

study of cognition and work contains much too little poetry, and since scientific journals in general tend to stick to what they consider their business and neglect other aspects of human life, we thought it would be worthwhile to publish the ten poems in the CTW. You will therefore in this issue find the first poem, together with an explanatory article by the two artists. The remaining poems will be published in the following nine issues of the CTW.