Editorial

It is very tempting to write this editorial with a focus on the magnificent technology that has revolutionized information work in the last thirty years. Online, networks, telecommunications, videotex, macro, mini, and microcomputers tend to become in our minds at least, the dominant components of our work.

Let us take just a moment to focus on a neglected information system – brains.

When (and it is not so long ago) the most sophisticated hardware available to information specialists was a card sorter, people (including this Editor) were writing erudite and complicated papers on the use of edge-notched cards. The minimal powers of the hardware available could *only* be surmounted by brain-power.

Consider some of these almost forgotten techniques:

Roles and links made it possible to provide syntactic relationships for indexing and retrieval; the KWIC index allowed our primitive machines to derive index-like listings; superimposed coding schemes allowed us to pack additional data into the 80 columns provided on a tabulating card; fragment codes and ciphers yielded us a sort of structural retrieval in chemistry.... The list is long and impressive.

Admittedly we have learned to *apply* the results of others' brain-power – engineers, programers etc. – but the ingenuity is that of applied technology, and the creation of basic and fundamental approaches is left all too often to academia. ISU is a journal of applications and of the policy considerations involved. We should not forget that we have a contribution to make to the creative processes needed for information-, and ultimately for knowledge-transfer.

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