

SIMON O'SHEA  
919 18TH STREET N. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

737-9038

MEMORANDUM

TO: IS & R System Users                      SUBJECT: Permuted Authority List  
FROM: Simon O'Shea                              DATE: October 13, 1967

The new KWIC Index, or Permuted Authority List, represents an important step in the planned development of the Information Storage and Retrieval System. It has been prepared at this time because the data base of descriptors is now relatively stable, that is, previously used descriptors are now regularly being used to index new documents.

This Permuted Authority List will greatly facilitate users in the preparation of questions. Not only does it make it easier to locate relevant search descriptors, but it also presents a completely edited list of descriptors.

The entire file of descriptors has been reviewed; misspellings have been eliminated; synonyms have been combined; and nomenclature has been standardized. This process has resulted in an approximate 1/5 reduction in the total number of descriptors used in the System.

Two introductory pages at the beginning of the Permuted Authority List explain its format and use. However, certain convenient features of the Permuted Authority List should be highlighted. For example:

1. Beginning on page 1006 through page 1017, the user will find a complete print out of all of the descriptors which have been assigned to index Helpful Information, or, as it appears in the System, "HI".

2. On page 349, the user will find a listing of all of the terms relating to the subject of "BENEFICIAL EFFECT CLAIMED".

3. The Project Officer was recently asked to conduct a search into the effects of various agents on lung surface tension. This question provides an example of the utility of the Permuted Authority List. Now, by referring to page 1811, it is possible to quickly see all of the terms that include the phrase, "SURFACE TENSION". It should be noted that a number of these descriptors were preceded by the word "LUNG", or by the word "ALVEOLAR". Previously it would have been necessary in the old Authority List to find these descriptors relating to surface tension in an alphabetical list under "ALVEOLAR" and "LUNG". In addition, the new Permuted Authority List allows the user to quickly spot two other possibly related descriptor groups. These are the two entries for "SURFACE FORCES DECREASE", which appears before "SURFACE TENSION", and the several entries beginning with the word "SURFACTANT".

4. Finally, the user can obtain a good idea of how detailed the indexing of documents has been by referring to the entries on pages 1203 to 1214 dealing with "LUNG CANCER". Here one finds hundreds of factors which have been associated or said to be causative in the development of Lung Cancer, as well as the various "SMOKING NONAS SOC" and "CAUSATION 3" entries.

It is recommended that every user spend a brief amount of time familiarizing himself with the Permuted Authority List. Examining a few entries, such as those for "CARBON MONOXIDE" and "POLONIUM" will demonstrate how all of the information on these topics can be located under one entry, where it would have been found in dozens of locations in the earlier alphabetical Authority List.

This new Permuted Authority List provides an extremely broad access to all of the subject matter contained in the more than 9,500 documents now loaded into the computer:

It should also be recognized that the publication of this Permuted Authority List is merely an interim step in the development of an even more convenient index. Si expects to publish an interrelated index late in November. This interrelated index will have the additional convenience of providing cross references. For example, in the case of Lung Cancer, a "SEE ALSO" entry will refer the user to Bronchus Cancer, Bronchus Carcinoma, et cetera.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this Permuted Authority List or if you should require any assistance in formulating questions.

*S.S.L.*

SOS:vap