

REPORT OF SPOT ANALYSIS OF UNIVAC PROGRAMS

The following letter was sent to 100 APS members, including session chairmen, heads of departments and volunteers. There were 44 replies.

Dear APS Member:

As you know the Federation conducted an experiment, under a grant, using the UNIVAC service as a means of programing the papers presented at the Spring Meeting. The only parts of the UNIVAC service actually used were the Subject Index and the arrangement of the printed abstracts in Part I of the March issue of Federation Proceedings. The actual program that was used, and printed in Part II of the March issue, was made up by the Society Secretaries as has been the custom in the past.

In order to evaluate the full experiment a comparative analysis of the handmade and the machine-made programs must be made. The APS Council is submitting copies of the UNIVAC completely integrated program and the UNIVAC physiology program (made up from abstracts submitted by APS members) to 100 selected members of the Society. The Council requests that each of you seriously analyze the programs and submit your comments to the Central Office of the Society on or before May 30 so that a decision can be made as to how much mechanization might be used next year.

The Federation realizes that the subject categories listed on Form B were not completely adequate so that your suggested revision would be appreciated. A separate subject category list for each Society of the Federation is being considered.

You are asked to go over the printed Physiology program (Secretary-made program, Part II of Proceedings); compare it with the mimeographed UNIVAC Physiology program; and with the way the same physiology papers that are integrated in the UNIVAC Federation-wide mimeographed program.

Which of the three programs is best? Cite specific examples to support your answer and state why you like one best. It is to be remembered that due to time limitation each session can only include 8 to 12 papers. This leaves some few sessions with dual categories.

The Council appreciates the time and effort involved in this spot analysis and hopes you will give serious thought to the matter and supply the Council with constructive criticism on or before May 30, 1960. It is by such surveys as this that the Council can best serve the desires and interests of the members.

Incl. Form B - please revise or submit one of your own.
UNIVAC Physiology Program
UNIVAC Federation Integrated Program

Several replies were short and narrative. A few were given in considerable detail with constructive criticism. The majority dealt with only the area of their immediate interest.

Comments have been abstracted and generalized for the purpose of this report.

Abstracts and Index

Those who did comment indicated that this method of listing abstracts in systematic order was good and should be retained. One comment was that IBM probably could do it cheaper. Another commented that having one number for each abstract would be a further improvement.

All comments on the index were favorable.

Integrated UNIVAC Federation Program

Comments on the general idea of integration were about equally divided with a very few more for integration than against. Those for integration recommended continuation of Intersociety Sessions. Sessions on the following were considered to be "hodgepodges" with little meaning: Renal; Endocrines; Biological Regulation; and Environmental. Many stated that papers were misplaced. One analyst stated that several papers were misplaced but, "I am damned if I know where I would put them in the program."

Many suggested that after general sorting the human touch is needed in arranging papers into properly titled sessions and sequence within sessions. It was felt that no one person could do this. Several suggested, relative to all programing, that a small group of 5 or 6 persons versed in different disciplines should sit with the Secretary for a day in setting up the final program.

UNIVAC APS Program

A very few stated this program was better than the Federation UNIVAC and just about as good as the Secretary's Program, but the great majority felt this program was the worst of the three. Sessions on the following general areas were particularly noted for poor organization: Pulmonary Blood Flow; Energy Metabolism; Nervous System; Special Senses; Circulation; Respiration (except Respiration Mechanics); Sex Hormones; Pituitary and Muscle.

The general statement of the majority was, "An awful mess."

Secretary's Program (The one actually used in 1960)

The general comment of all but two analysts was that this program was best of all three. The two negative comments were that the Federation UNIVAC program was better.

Emphasis was again placed on the importance of having a few experts in different fields work with the Secretary in the final arrangement of papers.

It was also stated by some that it was impossible to have absolutely perfect sessions since much depends on the number of papers received, the number of rooms available and the number of days and one must combine some categories to fill out a session. Much blame was placed on the authors, they should improve the titles to their papers to really indicate the contents.

Form B

There was not one single comment in favor of the present Form B. The kindest comment was one that stated it was fairly good but needed some few additions.

There were many suggestions for revisions but the majority were biased in favor of detailed revisions and additions in the categories of their special interest. Many particularly objected to the categories: Biological Regulation; and Cells.

Some of the constructive suggestions are listed below:

1. Should be revised every year to account for new fields.
2. Need more categories and sub-categories.
3. More definition needed in terms used.
4. Should use functional terms, not anatomical categories for physiologists.
5. Should be like a library classification.
6. Does not give machine enough information to place papers properly.
7. Can never please everybody but a committee of experts could devise a fairly acceptable form.

Summary

1. Listing of abstracts in systematic order should be retained.
2. Indexing method should be retained.
3. Form B must be radically revised. Continue author indication of a category.
4. Machine might be used for first sorting but the human element must be involved in the final programing.