

## Introduction to Symposium on Communication Aspects of Chemical Literature\*

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In these days of feverish attention to information storage and retrieval, it is all too easy to neglect aspects of the initial transmission of this information. The symposium in which the following papers were presented was therefore organized in a deliberate attempt to review some of the fundamentals of chemical communication, to take a look at the state of the art in this area, and to look at new findings that may prove useful to chemists and engineers.

This symposium has been termed "Introductory" because it should prove most informative to the non-expert—to the chemist who will use what is said to improve his own communications, and also to the chemical documentalist who has concentrated so hard on retrieving information that he has neglected aspects of its generation. However, in keeping with the policies of the American Chemical Society, each author has something new to say, be it fact or interpretation, that offers some challenge and interest to sophisticates.

The ACS Division of Chemical Literature has a long history of attention to the communication of chemical information. Following scattered papers in the 1940's—preceding its formal incorporation as a division of the ACS—the Division presented two major symposiums on chemical communication in the early 1950's, both under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert Casey, one of the Division's founders, later its chairman, and still later the author of a pioneering book on oral communication.<sup>1</sup> In the fall of 1954 the Division heard two related symposiums, one on information-processing equipment (with communication overtones) under the chairmanship of Mr. M. P. Doss,<sup>2</sup> another past chairman of the Division, and the second—on the technical report—under my chairmanship.<sup>3</sup> As may be noted from the references, both symposiums served as the foundations for books on their subjects.

In the middle 1950's, the Division actually had a subcommittee of its program committee devoted to communication, first under my chairmanship and then under that of Mrs. Irlene Stephens. Programs on commu-

nication were presented at each ACS meeting, sometimes as groups of individual papers, sometimes as symposiums. Some of the best of these papers were published in the *Journal of Chemical Education*; some later appeared as chapters in a book edited by Mr. T. E. R. Singer.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, one of the best symposiums—on chemical-marketing communications—was never published (its chairman, Mrs. Ethaline Cortelyou, is the author of a paper in this symposium). However, following a 1958 symposium on technical editing, under my chairmanship,<sup>5</sup> only sporadic attention has since been given to any of these subjects.

As authors of the papers that follow, we are privileged to have a distinguished group of the "old pro's" of chemical communication, old chiefly in the sense that it was their contributions in this field that made history in the early sessions of the Division. In their discussions on chemical communication, they deal with how to prepare the chemical paper—still the backbone of chemical communication; how best to present it orally; how to write the technical report—the keystone of publication of today's mission-oriented research; how to duplicate documents; how to alert chemical audiences to what is being reported; and finally—at the interface between communication and retrieval—what are the information-gathering and use habits of chemists. Perhaps the many other aspects of chemical communication can form the bases for future programs for the ACS Division of Chemical Literature.

### REFERENCES

- (1) R. S. Casey, "Oral Communication of Technical Information," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1958.
- (2) M. P. Doss, Ed., "Information-Processing Equipment," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1955.
- (3) B. H. Weil, Ed., "The Technical Report, Its Preparation, Processing, and Use in Industry and Government," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1953.
- (4) T. E. R. Singer, Ed., "Information and Communication Practice in Industry," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1958.
- (5) B. H. Weil, Ed., "Technical Editing," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1958.

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