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CONFERENCE

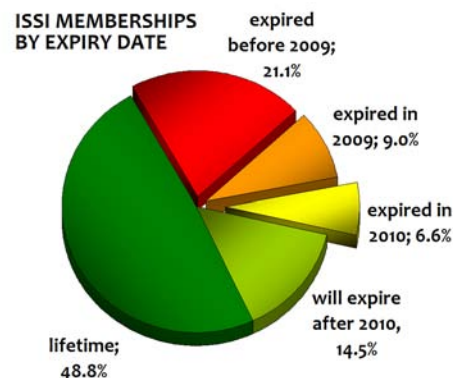
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EDITORIAL SHORTEST NEWSLETTER EVER

It could have had something to do either with a bad constellation of stars or a global scientometric conspiracy – or perhaps just UFOs were running mind controlling experiments on scientists intending to write articles to the ISSI Newsletter, we don't know. Either way, the fact is that the majority of the articles promised for this issue have remained unwritten or become eventually withdrawn, therefore this is the shortest ISSI Newsletter ever. As it may be considered as a virtue by many, I would not like to spoil this unique feature by a long editorial.

However, I must say a few words about memberships expiring by the end of 2010 (expiry dates can be checked on the membership cards). Prolongation of memberships could not be any simpler: just go to www.issi-society.info/join.html and follow the instructions. Re-registration may be skipped, but please note that updating your data is extremely important in case of e-mail addresses as emailing is the main way of communication between ISSI and its members. (Whenever an official announcement is sent out, we always receive tons of error messages from/about dead mailboxes, so if you are uncertain about the validity of your data, please go for re-registration – it's quick & painless, we promise!) Hope to welcome you on board again!

Balázs Schlemmer, ISSI administration



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JAN VLACHÝ (1937-2010)

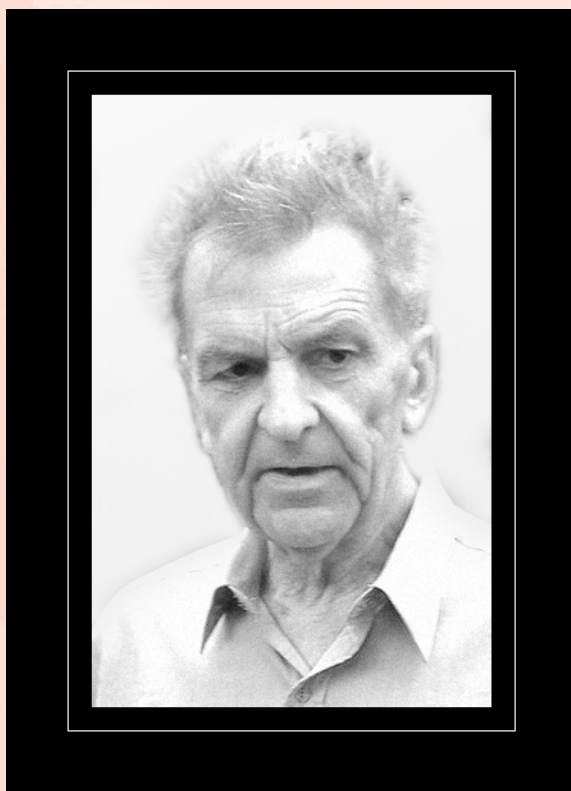
A PERSONAL OBITUARY

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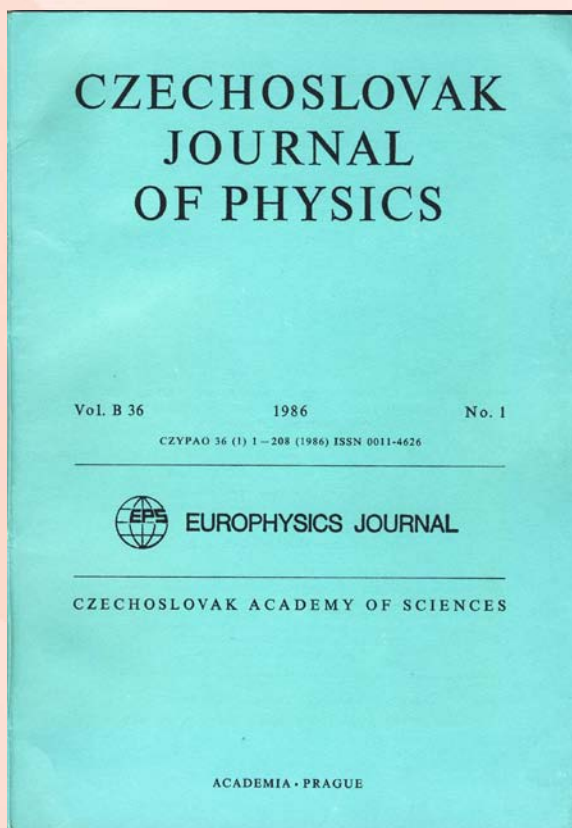
Jan Vlachý, one of the “founding fathers” of quantitative studies of science, died on 27th September 2010 during a stay in Berlin unexpectedly of a heart attack.

Jan was born on 7th February 1937 in Plzeň (Bohemia, Czechoslovakia). In 1955 he finished the school with the high-school diploma (matura) and studied afterwards nuclear physics at the Charles University in Prague. After his graduation he worked for some years in the Institute of Solid State Physics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV). He worked for almost three decades in various positions and in several institutions at the ČSAV and at the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), respectively. Already in the 1960s he turned his attention to the social sciences, especially their quantitative aspects.

On the occasion of being awarded the Derek de Solla Price Memorial Medal in 1989 Jan's contributions in scientometrics were acknowledged in detail (*Todorov, 1990*). Jan was a highly productive scientist, he published more than 400 papers in journals, conference proceedings, newsletters and books. From 1967 to 1986 he was Executive Editor of the *Czechoslovak Journal of Physics B* (CJPB). In this journal he published more



Jan was always ready for a joke: Jan and colleagues in Varna (Bulgaria) in the mid-1980s.



Jan as Editor of a special issue of Czechoslovak Journal of Physics on "Scientometric analyses in physics".

SCIENTIA YUGOSLAVICA 6(1-4) 267-275 (1980)

EVALUATING THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Jan VLACHÝ

Prague, Czechoslovakia

Empirical and theoretical experiences with the highly skewed distributions of performance among scientists and some other authors are reviewed. Data collected on several thousand populations of publishing researchers and artists in all major disciplines are grouped by community type, affiliation and period covered. A critical survey of the hitherto developed stochastic models is attempted, pointing out the methodological implications of how the various proposed frequency distribution functions conform with empirical findings. The quantitative material is analyzed in a manner to simplify statistical evaluation approaches by reducing the number of parameters involved and introducing versatile measures of inequality. The acquired evidence seems to provide a sound conceptual basis for typological stratifications and time series analyses of performance distribution within scientific and selected other creative communities, without seeking for a new explanation or interpretation of the underlying process. The significance of the now available empirical background and scientometric processing tools for the understanding of creativity patterns in general and for science policy decision-making in particular is briefly discussed.

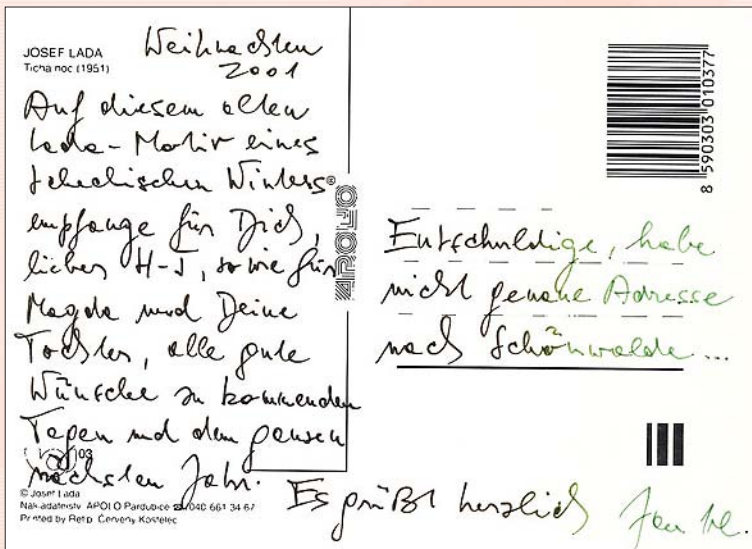
One of Jan's publications on Lotka's law in *Scientia Yugoslavica* (1980) with 309 references.

than 100 papers, mainly short communications on quantitative aspects of physical research. The most of his papers contained many diagrams, tables and long reference lists. His last remarkable contribution in the field of quantitative studies in science was published in 1994 in *Scientometrics*.

Although Jan had many contacts in the scientometrics community, he published his scientific papers mostly as a single author. I knew him since 1982, and it was a great honor for me, when he asked me in 1986 to publish two papers with him in CJPB. We met in Prague, and in Jan's office (and apartment) I became acquainted with his style of working a little better. He had at home a huge archive of reprints, books and a collection of documents for statistical analyses, especially in physics. Jan has compiled the data exclusively from the printed versions of databases (e.g. *Physics Abstracts*, *Physikalische Berichte* -

Physics Briefs, *Science Citation Index*); the data analysis was then carried out with a simple pocket calculator. It was a tremendous pleasure to work with him and to be stimulated by his enormous creativity and his enthusiasm.

Since middle of the 1990s Jan's main interest was the investigation of fates of



From a letter to the author, January 2001.



Probably the first publication on quantitative musicology in 1838 (Original: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek).

Czech resistance fighters during World War II. He felt obliged to the victims, because his father was in the resistance movement against the Nazi regime. In 1943 Jan's father was executed in the Plötzensee Prison (Berlin).

The life story of Alfred J. Lotka was another focus of his interest. Therefore Jan traveled to Lotka's birthplace Lviv (Ukraine, former Lemberg), to Poland, England, France (Alsace) and Switzerland. He has also planned a trip to Princeton, N.J. (USA), to the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library where Lotka's unpublished works are archived. Unfortunately, the results of his extensive research are unpublished.

Jan's passion since his youth was the classical music. I like to remember a joint concert evening. Robert Schumann was one of his favourite composers, apart from the Czech ones. Jan liked to talk about the fact that Schumann was probably the first empirical musicologist, because he published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* the first statistical study of the performance

frequency of composers – a “Lotka distribution” long before Alfred Lotka (*Schumann*, 1838).

Furthermore, Jan was always very interested in history. He was a knowledgeable guide in “his city of Prague”, especially beyond the paths of tourists. I will never forget an exciting trip to Nelahozeves near Prague, the birthplace of Antonin Dvořák.

Jan was a passionate hiker. Especially he liked to go for a ramble in the Bohemian Paradise (Český ráj).

On the occasion of his many visits to Berlin, we met from time to time. Discussions with him were always very informative and inspiring. Recently, we communicated frequently via e-mails, because Jan planned for 2011 a workshop of “old scientometricians” in Prague. This is one of the reasons why Jan attended in his last year more often academic events and conferences, e.g. in Berlin and Leiden (Netherlands).

The term “career” was not part of Jan’s vocabulary; answers to scientific questions were

always the most essential to him. He was an uncompromising man, in life and in science. With the death of Jan Vlachý the community of scientometricians has lost one of its outstanding and most creative members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author thanks Beate Schindler (Berlin) for valuable biographical information and for documents.

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The house where Alfred J. Lotka was born in Lemberg (now Lviv, ul. Lyczakowska 19 A). Photo © Beate Schindler

REPORT ON THE ASIST 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

BY THE OFFICERS OF ASIST SIG/MET



The metrics community was well-represented at the recent American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST) Annual Meeting held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in late October. We are also pleased to announce that the longstanding virtual special interest group (SIG) on metrics was elevated to a full SIG at the meeting.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Of note were the sessions on scholarly publishing and informetrics.

The scholarly publishing session consisted of papers by Tove Faber Frandsen of the University of Southern Denmark

and Jeppe Nicolaisen of the Royal School of Library and Information Science (*A lucrative seat at the table: Are editorial board members generally over-cited in their own journals?*), who studied citing practices in four journals for evidence of flattery citations; Erjia Yan and Ying Ding of Indiana University (*Measuring scholarly impact in heterogeneous networks*), who proposed a new measure, called a P-rank, for evaluating the status of articles, authors, and journals in heterogeneous networks; and Chaoqun Ni and Ying Ding of Indiana University (*Journal clustering through interlocking editorship information*), who examined the feasibility of determining journal groups based on commonalities in editorial board membership.

The session on informetrics contained papers by Jeanine Finn, University of Texas at Austin (*Childhood vaccinations and autism, 1998-2010: Expert domains in formal information exchanges*), who outlined a qualitative approach to the analysis of a controversial health topic; Dangzhi Zhao and Andreas Strotmann of the University of Alberta (*Mapping the highly collaborative Stem Cell research field: Adding last-author-based analysis to the author co-citation analysis family*), who found that last author inclusion produced similar results as all author inclusion; and Mu-hsuan Huang and Chi-Shiou Lin of National Taiwan University (*International collaboration and counting inflation in the assessment of national research productivity*), who concluded that different counting methods for publications resulted in relatively similar rankings.

Poster presentations addressing scholarly communication and metrics topics included:

- ▶ *Composition of Scientific Teams and Publication Productivity*, Besiki Stvilia, Charles Hinnant, Katy Schindler, Adam Worrall, Gary Burnett, Kathleen Burnett, Michelle Kazmer and Paul Marty, all Florida State University
- ▶ *Influence & Incorporation: John Forbes Nash and the "Nash Equilibrium"*, Katherine McCain and Roger McCain, both, Drexel University
- ▶ *The Usage of Scientific Data in SDSS Publications: A Content Analysis*, Jian Zhang, Chaomei Chen and Michael Vogeley, all Drexel University
- ▶ *Scientific International Collaboration of Turkey, Greece, Poland, and Portugal: A Bibliometric Analysis*, Selenay Aytac, Long Island University
- ▶ *A Comparison Between Usage-based and Citation-based Methods for Recommending Scholarly Research Articles*, Andre Vellino, CISTI, National Research Council
- ▶ *Delineating Citation Concepts*, Kun Lu and Dietmar Wolfram, both School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
- ▶ *Evaluating Data Citation and Sharing Policies in the Earth Sciences*, Nicholas Weber, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Heather Piwowar, and Todd Vision, both National Evolutionary Synthesis Center

The conference proceedings are available at: <http://www.asis.org/asist2010/proceedings/>

ANNOUNCING THE NEW SIG/MET

Under the leadership of Indiana University's Cassidy Sugimoto and Staša Milojević, SIG/MET was approved by the ASIST Board of Directors to become a full special interest group. The officers for the new SIG are:

- ▶ *Jonathan Levitt* – Chair
- ▶ *Staša Milojević* – Chair-Elect
- ▶ *Dietmar Wolfram* – Secretary/Treasurer
- ▶ *Angela Zoss* – Communications Officer/Webmaster
- ▶ *Cassidy Sugimoto* – Programming Officer
- ▶ *Judit Bar-Ilan* – Liaison Officer
- ▶ *Chaochun Ni* – Student Paper Contest

Conference attendees with an interest in metrics-related topics gathered at a planning meeting to discuss the activities of the SIG for the next year. A proposal for a workshop similar to the one held at the ASIST meeting co-sponsored with ISSI in 2009 in Vancouver is planned for the 2011 meeting to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in early October.

The change in the SIG status does not affect the SIGMETRICS mailing list. Members of the metrics community who are members of ASIST are encouraged to join the new SIG when they renew their ASIST membership.

THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENTOMETRICS AND UNIVERSITY EVALUATION (ICSUE – 2010)



RONALD ROUSSEAU
KHBO, Oostende,
foreign member of CASSSP

On 5 and 6 November 2010 the 6th International Conference on Scientometrics and University Evaluation (ICSUE – 2010) took place in Wuhan (China), at the campus of Wuhan University. The conference was organized by RCCSE (Research Center for Chinese Science Evaluation) under the direction of Professor Qiu Junping, in close collaboration with CASSSP (the Chinese Association for Science of Science and S&T Policy) and Huazhong Normal University (Wuhan). ISSI was co-organizer and indeed several members of our society attended.

As president of ISSI I had the honour to be one of the speakers during the opening ceremony.

The main focus was on university rankings but many other scientometric themes were discussed. As such, talks were presented by Robert J. Morse from US News & World Report, Phil Baty from Times Higher Education and Martin Ince from Quacquarelli Symonds (UK). David Liu, representative of Thomson Reuters in China also gave a presentation. Hou Yungchi (Taiwan) made a comparison between these rank-



ings, including also the HEAECT (Higher Education and Accreditation Council of Taiwan) and the Cybermetrics rankings. Other topics covered during the conference were: reference analysis, international collaboration, knowledgemetrics, building World Class universities in Africa, Zipf's law, nanotechnology and patents in China, visualization, enterprise knowledge management, Q-measures and network analysis, innovation, emergent fields, teaching

quality, impact factors, peer review and even protest groups and democracy. Basically, Chinese colleagues are interested in the same topics as all other colleagues around the world.

The conference attracted more than 300 participants and was excellently organized. Many students took the opportunity to learn about hot topics in the field and to come into contact with some of its international and Chinese main players.

