

# Garfield's Grouse on "The Terrible Things Journals Do To Us"



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## Abstract

The guru of Information Science, Eugene Garfield, was aghast as to "the terrible things journals do to us." Personal examples of such grouses are given. The cure is prescribed in terms of the desirable practices of putting essential data on the first page.

**Keywords:** Journals; Title; Volume; Reprints; Photocopies; First Page

## Introduction

The guru of Information Science, Eugene Garfield, [1] was aghast concerning "the terrible things journals do to us." He instanced the things which needed to be corrected, cited them, and then presented the needed corrections.

## Investigation

Thousands of reprints, which I requested for, from all over the world, were studied. It was forty of them that provided clues for evaluating the above surprising title. It was part of the title discussed sensitively by him in the weekly Current Contents in 1983 under "Idiosyncrasies and Errors, or the Terrible Things Journals Do to Us." As he instanced, "I had complained that even though the first page of every article included the journal's name, date and pagination, the volume was omitted" [1]. Therefore, let me dilate on the idiosyncrasies which I spotted. Of the 40 reprints, up to eight contained no reference pages [2-9]. Most commonly, journals left out volume numbers [10-38]. Incidentally, most of these were from USA, this being merely a reflection of what I discovered when I analyzed 2,049 reprint requests sent to me from all over the world, [39] namely, that USA outdistanced all countries in the reprints race. Curiously, information journals also deleted volume numbers. College & Research Libraries, [14] and Library Journal [24] featured in this respect. And so did Scholarly Publishing [35]. Little wonder that Whole Earth Review [39] published a work entitled "Every system of knowledge is blind." Certainly, numerous journals in this series had a blind spot for volume numbers. One author [18] rectified matters himself by inserting 2, the volume number, in his photocopy of Head and Neck Surgery reprint. Altogether, 14 (35%) of the received reprints were photocopies. This shows the extent to which scientists go in order to assist requesters. Be that as it may, I would

plead that some extra trouble should be taken to add any missing volume, pages, etc.

## Discussion

In this connection, it is well to mention that, in addition to the requested reprints, several authors relished sending what may be called bonus reprints, i.e., unrequested reprints. However, much as I received them gratefully, they would serve their purpose better if the missing reference data had been provided. Certainly, when I received Keith Green's [15] "An evaluation of citation-return on reprints," I wrote him and he supplied the volume number [40] adding nicely, "Thank you for your interest in our work."

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, to eliminate the current idiosyncrasies is possible. As O'Brien put it [41] "I might persuade editors to commence all articles on a right-hand page and to put the journal name, volume number, and year at the foot of each page." Perhaps, it is really enough to put these data and the inclusive pagination on every first page [42].

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