The FINITE STRING Newsletter

Results of the 1978 Publications Survey

Prior to this issue, since its inception in 1974, the *American Journal of Computational Linguistics* had been published exclusively in microfiche form (with opaque index cards), consisting of pages reproduced directly from authors' typewritten manuscripts. In July of 1978 a proposal was made for publishing the Journal primarily in a phototypeset, hard-copy form at a cost that was only slightly higher than the microfiche form and well within the ACL's financial means, without requiring a dues increase. Based on this proposal, a survey of the entire individual membership of the ACL was conducted to determine people's preferences for the form of publication of the *AJCL*. Over 500 questionnaires were sent out, and over 200 responses were received within the first couple of weeks. *About 80% of these respondents indicated a preference for a primarily hard-copy form of publication.*

Based on these results, the ACL Executive Committee decided at the 1978 Annual Meeting to begin publishing the *AJCL* in this new form with the first issue of 1979. (As it turned out, however, technical and other difficulties associated with producing the first issue caused several delays, eventually resulting in the decision to skip publication in 1979 altogether and start the new form with this first issue of 1980.)

The new form. In its new form, each quarterly issue of the *AJCL* will contain about 50 pages, at least half of which will be devoted to technical articles. The rest of the issue will consist of book reviews, announcements, news items, information on programs and courses in computational linguistics, descriptions of research projects and of resources relevant for research, and the comprehensive current bibliography with abstracts of publications and reports in the field. The amount of material published will be substantially the same as that included in previous years on multiple microfiches, in spite of the smaller number of actual pages, because the new format will accommodate more information in less space.

Included with each issue of the *AJCL* will be a single 4-by-6-inch microfiche containing the same material as the printed version, one journal page per frame. However, since the microfiche can accommodate up to 98 pages, it will be possible to include additional material, such as appendices for technical articles, program listings, and the membership roster. An index card will summarize the contents of the microfiche, so that this form will be appropriate for independent archival use.

The survey materials. The cover letter and the questionnaire from the 1978 survey are reproduced in their entirety on pages 68-70 in the microfiche supplement to this issue. (Incidentally, this furnishes a good example of the kind of material that this supplement can be used for.) The two-page cover letter is a detailed presentation of the proposal for hard-copy publication, with its feasibility supported by facts and figures. The one-page questionnaire gives nine publication alternatives, ranging from all microfiche to all hard copy, which the respondent was asked to rank using the numbers 1 through 9; there are also four questions to directly solicit the respondent's feelings about hard copy versus microfiche.

Results. Of the 513 questionnaires sent out (383 to the U.S., 40 to Canada, and 90 to other countries), 212 responses were received prior to the meeting at which the decision was made (169 from the U.S., 21 from Canada, and 22 from other countries). The table below shows, for each of the nine alternatives, the percentage of the 212 respondents who ranked that alternative as number 1 (i.e. their first choice). It also shows the average rank computed for each alternative and the resulting order of preference for the nine alternatives. (In the brief descriptions of the alternatives, HC stands for hard copy, and MF stands for microfiche.)

Alternative	First Choice	Avg. Rank	Order
1. Status quo	5%	5.1	7
2. With HC newsletter	2%	4.9	5
3. With HC's available	11%	4.0	4
4. HC journal and MF newsletter	1%	5.0	6
5. Just a newsletter	0%	7.7	9
6. Proposal: HC *and* single MF	20%	3.1	2
7. Proposal: HC *or* single MF	38%	2.2	1
8. Proposal: HC only	20%	3.9	3
9. Other	3%	6.6	8

It can be seen that 78% of the respondents selected either alternative 6, 7 or 8 as their first choice and also that those alternatives were the first three in order of preference. Each of these was just a variation on the basic theme of a primarily hard-copy journal as proposed in the cover letter. Although alternative 7 actually had the most support, the decision was made to implement alternative 6, which provides each member with *both* hard copy *and* microfiche, because it provides more flexibility of publication, while still allowing those people who preferred 7 or 8 to have what they want, simply by discarding one form or the other when they receive it.

The following table summarizes the responses to the four questions included in the survey. Here, too, it can be seen that respondents were very positive to the idea of a primarily hard-copy publication.

Question	Yes	No	No Ans.
A. Would *AJCL* be read more?	72%	2%	26%
B. Would submissions increase?	56%	8%	36%
C. Would you elect to receive HC?	63%	18%	19%
D. Should dues depend on form?	47%	17%	36%

The responses were also tabulated *separately* for the U.S., Canada, and the other countries, but the results did not differ significantly from the combined results shown. About 35 additional responses were received after the meeting, but it was apparent from looking at them carefully that they would not significantly affect the results already tabulated.

George E. Heidorn

Program of the 1979 ACL Meeting

The 17th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics was held at the University of California at San Diego, in La Jolla, California, on the weekend of August 11-12, 1979. The program committee for the meeting consisted of Norm Sondheimer (Chairman), Barbara Sangster, Bonnie Lynn Webber, and Ralph Weischedel, and the local arrangements chairman was Jim Levin. The 24 papers listed below were presented there. Copies of the proceedings, which includes the full text of most of these papers and extended abstracts of the others, along with an introduction to each session by its chairperson, are available for $5 from Don Walker at the address given on the inside front cover of this issue.

SESSION I - Language Structure and Parsing
Martin Kay, *Xerox Palo Alto Research Center*

Towards a Self-Extending Parser
Jaime G. Carbonell, *Carnegie-Mellon University*

Word Expert Parsing
Stephen Small, *University of Maryland*

Schank/Riesbeck vs. Norman/Rumelhart: What's the Difference?
Marc Eisenstadt, *The Open University*

Toward a Computational Theory of Speech Perception
Jonathan Allen, *MIT*

Ungrammaticality and Extra-Grammaticality in Natural Language Understanding Systems
Stan Kwasny, *The Ohio State University*
Norman K. Sondheimer, *Sperry Univac*

Generalized Augmented Transition Network Grammars for Generation from Semantic Networks
Stuart C. Shapiro, *State University of N.Y. at Buffalo*

SESSION II - Knowledge Organization and Application
Aravind K. Joshi, *University of Pennsylvania*

Taxonomy, Descriptions, and Individuals in Natural Language Understanding
Ronald J. Brachman, *Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.*

Semantics of Conceptual Graphs
John F. Sowa, *IBM Systems Research Institute*

On the Automatic Transformation of Class Membership Criteria
Barbara Sangster, *Rutgers University*

A Snapshot of KDS, a Knowledge Delivery System
James A. Moore and William C. Mann, *USC/Information Sciences Institute*

The Use of Object-Specific Knowledge in Natural Language Processing
Mark H. Burstein, *Yale University*

Reading with a Purpose
Michael Lebowitz, *Yale University*

SESSION III - Dialogue
Jane Robinson, *SRI International*

Paraphrasing Using Given and New Information in a Question-Answer System
Kathleen R. McKeown, *University of Pennsylvania*

Where Questions
Benny Shanon, *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

The Role of Focussing in Interpretation of Pronouns
Candace L. Sidner, *MIT*

The Structure and Process of Talking about Doing
James Levin and Edwin Hutchins, *University of California, San Diego*

Design for Dialogue Comprehension
William C. Mann, *USC/Information Sciences Institute*

Plans, Inference, and Indirect Speech Acts
James F. Allen, *University of Rochester*
C. Raymond Perrault, *University of Toronto*

SESSION IV - Applications
David G. Hays, *State University of N.Y. at Buffalo*

EUFID: A Friendly and Flexible Front-end for Data Management Systems
Marjorie Templeton, *Systems Development Corp.*

An Application of Automated Language Understanding Techniques to the Generation of Data Base Elements
Georgette Silva, Christine Montgomery, and Don Dwiggins, *Operating Systems, Inc.*

Response Generation in Question-Answering Systems
Ralph Grishman, *New York University*

Natural Language Input to a Computer-Based Glaucoma Consultation System
Victor B. Cielsielski, *Rutgers University*

Prospects for Computer-Assisted Dialect Adaption
David J. Weber, *UCLA and Summer Inst. of Ling.*
William C. Mann, *USC/Information Sciences Institute*

Powerful Ideas in Computational Linguistics - Implications for Problem Solving and Education
Gerhard Fischer, *University of Stuttgart*