

P.P.

December 19, 1963

Mr. Marc P. Marthaler  
12, rue de la Dole  
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Marthaler:

Thank you very much for your letter and for the articles.

For a number of years, I have been interested in developing an information retrieval system for references in psychopharmacology, psychiatry, and psychology. This Institute, which was organized in the summer of 1962, has a 5,000 volume library as its initial collection, and has an accession rate of 1,500 volumes per year. An additional description of the Institute is enclosed.

The needs of the system include the identification of articles as they appear in a wide range of journals; notification of scientists that articles that may be of interest to them have appeared; a coding system for titles, abstracts, and reprints which would permit us to make searches for articles of interest both within our own collection and, if possible, from other sources. Ideally, the retrieval system should be established to classify articles as they appear and then, depending on the availability of funds, go back for as many years as may be reasonable.

In past years, I developed a uniterm system for our library, but found this too cumbersome. It depended on abstracting by the professional scientists of the laboratory and these men were never consistent in their ways of classifying articles. In the past few years, the availability of computer equipment has stimulated our interest to develop a computer based information processing system.

The Institute has available its own IBM 1710-1620 computer with 40K memory and random access disk accessories. The latter permits immediate access for up to two million characters for each disk and provides an

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ideal way of maintaining the master citation files. This facility is backed by the IBM 7072 at the university and through our disks, we are able to use their facility very easily.

At the present time, the Institute has two medical librarians and an abstracter. I would like to consider the appointment of somebody like yourself to develop an information processing system for the hybrid field of psychopharmacology.

The magnitude of the problem can best be seen by referring to Psychopharmacology Abstracts, a publication for 1961 and 1962. Articles included in these abstracts form the basis of the interest of the Institute. However, there are scientists whose interests are broader than are represented by these abstracts.

I believe we would be interested in knowing more of your experience in developing such systems. It is apparent from your references that you have prepared a project proposal, but it is not clear as to the present status of that project. My associates and I would be pleased to know more about that program, as well as any suggestions you may have for developing such a program here. I have taken the liberty of discussing your curriculum vita with the director of the computer center and the assistant provost at Washington University and any recommendations for appointment would be made in conjunction with the University.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M. D.  
Director

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