

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON PATENT OFFICE RESEARCH ON INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

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The four papers which comprise this session present a unified description of a research program undertaken by the U.S. Patent Office on information search and retrieval. There is an undeniable importance to this topic, in its own right, because it affects the work of the Patent Office and many other scientific and technical organizations, both public and private.

Nevertheless, the inherent scope of the meeting is broader than information retrieval or the use of scientific documentation. You will observe, in the papers that follow, that we are dealing with the properties of large organizations and complex adjudication processes. The present embodiment of the study is the Patent Office and the work of the patent examiner. Many of the same problems will occur in the regulatory and benefit granting agencies of government and in a substantial range of private organizations.

Mr. Spencer's presentation will give the context in which the Patent Office and the patent examiner must be observed. You will note the exceptionally demanding definition of literature search and the imposing difficulty of the patent examiner's job.

With this realistic statement of the problem facing the Patent Office and its personnel, you will be equipped to understand the purpose and approach of the paper by Dr. Bryant in which he constructs a general model of the examining procedure. The proposed model provides a framework for the analysis of the performance of patent examiners. In addition, it provides the specifications for reporting systems and experimental designs for the gathering of data essential to useful applications of the model. You will note that Dr. Bryant's model has already been fitted out with preliminary

data for a summary characterization of the examining activity at the Patent Office and to illustrate some of the kinds of analysis which become possible with this approach.

Donald King addresses himself to some of the technical problems in experimental design which arose in the course of this work. He will present some early experimental results.

Dr. Cornog, in the final paper in this session, will discuss the particular aspects of the research problem that required her services as an experimental psychologist. In particular, the experimentation involved the observation of highly trained and extremely sophisticated personnel, who could not help but be aware of the implications of the experiments and studies of which they were subjects.

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Dr. Edward C. Bryant has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from the University of Wyoming and a doctorate from Iowa State University.

Mr. Donald W. King received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wyoming.

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