

INFORMATION LINKS

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE EVANS LIBRARY
FEBRUARY 2006



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FROM THE DEAN'S DESK – IMPACT FACTORS: “A POX UPON THE LAND”

This month's column considers “impact factors,” to contribute to some recent forum dialog on this phenomenon of scholarly publishing. “Impact factors” are a grading system for scholarly journals, developed by Eugene Garfield, founder of the Institute for Scientific Information. He applied impact factors as a way to help him identify the most important publications to cover in the *ISI Science Citation Index*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *Current Contents*, and related information products. Mr. Garfield reportedly now compares his brainchild grading system to “nuclear energy: a force that can help society but can unleash mayhem when it is misused.”

Impact factors can be a 'force that helps' by enabling scientists to gauge what publications are likely to provide the most attention to their research papers.

ISI calculated impact factors for about 6,000 science journals and 2,000 social science journals. Here's how ISI calculated the 2004 impact factor for *Nature*. ISI counted the number of 2004 citations to all of the articles that appeared in *Nature* in 2002-2003. This number, when divided by the number of articles published in *Nature* in 2002-2003, yields an impact factor of 32.182. About 32 citations to each *Nature* 2002-2003 article were counted in 2004. *Nature* has the 9th highest impact factor among all journals 'measured.' Only 25% of the articles cited from *Nature* garnered about 89% of the citations.

Impact factors can be a 'force that helps' by enabling scientists to gauge what publications are likely to provide the most attention to their research papers. Publishers and editors

can gauge their place in the scholarly world relative to their competitors. Librarians can gauge which journals to purchase or cancel.

'Mayhem is unleashed,' however, when the impact factor of a journal becomes a surrogate for the impact, or quality, of a specific article from that journal, or a surrogate for the impact of an individual researcher on the scholarly community. Increasingly, impact factors are reported to play a role in hiring, tenure, promotion, and funding decisions. Because a high impact factor is a big plus for a publisher, there is concern that publishers may accept papers if they sense these papers will be highly cited. Publishers can also inflate their impact factors if they 'self-cite.' In one case, about 85% of the citations to a journal came from the journal itself.

An excellent discussion of journal impact factors appeared in a recent issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. If you are interested in reading the article, send me an email at celine@fit.edu or give me a call at x7111.

Celine Song



FEBRUARY SPECIAL HOURS

The Library will be closed on Monday, February 20, in keeping with the campus President's Day holiday.

Otherwise normal hours will be observed in February.

They are:

Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. – midnight

Friday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 10:00 a.m. – midnight



DISPLAY - BLACK HISTORY: STORIED LIVES

Continuing in the Library lobby is “**Black History: Storied Lives**,” a display with multiple components. Not only does it feature books, journal articles, government documents, and Internet sites, but it also highlights a Web counterpart (<http://www.lib.fit.edu/pubs/librarydisplays/BlackHistory/website.htm>), popular “trading cards” that detail facts about a variety of historically influential black men and women, and a brochure that can act as a starting point for research. Recently added is a trading card that honors the recipient of Florida Tech's 2006 Pioneer Award, Julius Montgomery. Mr. Montgomery was recognized for his service to the university and community at a special Alumni Affairs event on January 11, 2006. In 1959, Montgomery and two other African-American students voluntarily withdrew from the Brevard Engineering College (now Florida Institute of Technology) when Brevard County School officials threatened to close the college down if African-American students attended classes in the rented county facilities. According to Humanities & Communication professor Dr. Gordon Patterson, “Mr. Montgomery's sacrifice saved the college.” Enhanced by artifacts lent to the Library by Florida Tech faculty member, Dr. David Clay, this exhibit will continue through February.



SPRING 2006 GRADUATE RESEARCH WORKSHOP – DEADLINE DRAWS NEAR

Monday, February 6, is the registration deadline for the Library's Spring 2006 graduate research workshop. The workshops will be held on **Thursday, February 9**, 5:30 – 9:00 p.m., **Friday, February 10**, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m., and **Saturday, February 11**, 8:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in the Edwin A. Link Multimedia Room. Geared toward the bibliographic research needs of graduate students, these three identical half-day sessions include three distinct one-hour modules - #1) research essentials, #2) LINK resources and services, and #3) subject-specific breakout sessions. To initiate [registration](#) or to receive more information, graduate students who are interested may contact Joanne Savage, Instructional Programs Technician, at jsavage@fit.edu or at x7656, or may visit the Library News section of the LINK.

DID YOU KNOW?

At its annual meeting in December 2005, the Central Florida Library Cooperative (CFLC) named the Evans Library a 2004-2005 Interlibrary Loan ALL Star Library! Recognizing the highly professional efforts of Tori Smith, Nate Hough, Arlene Ferguson, and others, CFLC Executive Director Marta Westall commended the Library for enhancing the resource base of central Florida network libraries and presented the Library with five certificates for CFLC workshop registrations.



Photos (L-R): Julius Montgomery, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Bessie Coleman. From library display, “Black History: Storied Lives”