ABC: A program to convert PSYCHLIT CD-ROM abstracts into APA-style bibliographies

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The storage of information on compact disks (termed CD-ROM) has made possible the transcription of reference indexes directly to a computer. In psychology, one of the most widely used of these indexes is "Psychological Abstracts," published by the American Psychological Association. The abstracts referenced since 1973 are currently available on CD-ROM under the name PSYCHLIT, a convenient and highly flexible database. The database can be searched by author, title, key word, language, journal, publication date, or any word found in the abstract. Additional searches can be readily made by using logical constructs. The results of these searches can then be viewed on a personal computer, printed, or copied to disk.

One serious limitation to the PSYCHLIT system is that the citations are not presented in APA format (see Figure 1 for a sample output from PSYCHLIT). To remedy this incompatibility, we have written a conversion program, ABC (Abstract to Bibliography Conversion), which reads a PSYCHLIT file and outputs an APA-format bibliography. This bibliography is stored as an ASCII text file and can be read by most word processors. This saves manuscript preparation time by eliminating the need to enter references available through PSYCHLIT manually.

Abstracts can be saved to disk from the PSYCHLIT database by pressing the escape key and choosing the transfer option. Once transferred to disk, the file that contains the abstracts should not be altered or reformatted. If a word processor is used, the abstract file should not be modified or saved to disk unless the file is saved without formatting (this option is available on Microsoft Word).

ABC was written in Turbo Pascal (Version 3.0, Borland International Inc, 1985) on an IBM PC-AT computer. Copies of the program and source code are available from the authors. At the DOS prompt, typing ABC will begin program execution. ABC then prompts for the name of the input and output files. After checking the input and output files for errors, ABC converts the format of the input file to near APA format and writes it to the designated output file. An example of the output is shown in Figure 2.

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TI: The effect of interstimulus and intrastimulus complexity on a same-different discrimination task.

AU: Jones, Craig-T.; Henderson, Donna-M.; Bork, Tanya-M.

IN: U North Dakota, Center for Cognitive Sciences, Lathrup Village

JN: Journal-of-Experimental-Psychology: Human-Perception-and-Performance; 1982 Vol 4 212-234

IS: 87550040

LA: English

PY: 1982

AB: An experiment was conducted in which 80 college students were asked to discriminate pairs of four by four binary matrix stimuli. Subjects were assigned to 2 groups. The first group was asked to check off all the same pairs, the second group was asked to check off all the different pairs. Each subject had to discriminate stimulus pairs in 8 sets of 120 stimuli each. The order of the sets presented was counterbalanced across subjects in a Latin square design. The subjects had one and one half minutes to complete each set. Performance was scored in terms of number completed and number of incorrect discriminations. Analysis of covariance and multiple regression were used to ascertain the effect of 2 measures of information load and two measures of pattern discriminability.

KP: stimulus complexity; same-different discrimination tasks; measures of perceptual efficiency;

DE: PERCEPTION-DISCRIMINATION; STIMULUS-COMPLEXITY;

CC: 3530; 35

PO: Human

UD: 8708

AN: 74-23341

JC: 3047

Figure 1. Sample output from PSYCHLIT. This entry is completely fictitious. It is not on PSYCHLIT but is written in the format of a PSYCHLIT citation.

Jones, C. T., Henderson, D. M., & Bork, T. M. (1982). The effect of interstimulus and intrastimulus complexity on a same-different discrimination task. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 4, 212-234.

Figure 2. ABC output for input from Figure 1.

Several errors in conversion are possible. Problems may arise if names are hyphenated. ABC cannot discriminate between hyphenated last names and multiple last names (e.g., "van Hagen" cannot be distinguished from "Hirsch-Adelman"), so the hyphen is removed from all names even if it belongs. Cited books or book chapters may also generate aberrant citations. ABC has no way of distinguishing book citations from journal articles. Since most PSYCHLIT citations are of journal articles, the program converts all abstracts to journal citation form. In addition, the author list for the references that are output by ABC may not be perfect because PSYCHLIT abbreviates entries to save space. However, most citations will be correct.

Availability. To receive a copy of this program, send a disk and a self-addressed stamped envelope to M. Kahana, Department of Psychology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106. Please specify disk type and format. The program will run on an IBM-PC/XT/AT, PS/2, or compatible.

REFERENCE

BORLAND INTERNATIONAL INCORPORATED. (1984). *Turbo Pascal version 3.0 reference manual* [Computer program manual]. Scotts Valley, CA: Author.

(Revision accepted for publication March 1, 1989.)