

# Timelines of Creativity: A Study of Intellectual Innovators in Information Science

Blaise Cronin and Lokman I. Meho

School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

E-mail: {bcronin, meho}@indiana.edu

**We explore the relationship between creativity and both chronological and professional age in information science using a novel bibliometric approach that allows us to capture the *shape* of a scholar's career. Our approach draws on D.W. Galenson's (2006) analyses of artistic creativity, notably his distinction between conceptual and experimental innovation, and also H.C. Lehman's (1953) seminal study of the relationship between stage of career and outstanding performance. The data presented here suggest that creativity is expressed in different ways, at different times, and with different intensities in academic information science.**

## Introduction

Creativity announces itself in different ways and at different times in the lives of scientists, writers, and performers. Harvey Lehman's (1953) seminal study more than half a century ago established in authoritative fashion the relationship between chronological age and outstanding performance for a very wide variety of intellectual, artistic, and sporting activities. He provided *inter alia*, the age ranges within which chemists, mathematicians, astronomers, geologists, botanists, psychologists, and many others develop their most original and influential ideas. Lehman generalized that "the maximum production rate for output of highest quality usually occurs at an earlier age than the maximum rate for less distinguished works by the same individual" (p. 326). Summarizing a vast body of data, we can say that scientists and scholars typically make their major contributions at a relatively early stage in their careers and that there are sometimes notable differences in the age-innovation relationship both across and within disciplines.

Recently, David Galenson explored human creativity in the art world. In a series of studies (encapsulated in Galenson, 2006), he identified two distinct forms of artistic innovation: experimental and conceptual. His research built upon the

earlier investigations of Lehman (1953), who devoted a chapter of his book *Age and Achievement* to plotting "performance age-curves" for artists and architects (pp. 70–85). In short, Galenson (2006) found that there are painters who produce experimental innovations (Think slow and incremental.) and others who produce conceptual innovations (Think fast and spectacular.); Rembrandt and Cézanne are examples of the former group, Picasso and Warhol the latter. However, Galenson (2004) recommended that the experimentalist/conceptualist distinction should be viewed "not simply as a binary categorization but instead as a continuum" (p. 126), adding that the two broad categories may both comprise "extreme and moderate" practitioners (p. 124). One of Galenson's (2003a) key findings is that "important conceptual painters produce famous *individual masterpieces* [italics added], but great experimental painters do not, instead producing important *bodies of work* [italics added]" (p. 14). Another is that experimentalists tend to produce "their best work *late* [italics added] in their careers" while conceptualists tend to make "their greatest contributions *early* [italics added]" (p. 14).

Galenson (2003b) noted similarities between artists and academics: "Like the research scholar, the modern artist's goal is to innovate—to produce new methods and results that change the work of other practitioners" (p. 18). Furthermore, Galenson (2005a) stated that the "greatest artists are obviously not those who produce the most works, or even those who produce the most good works, but rather those who produce the works of greatest importance" (p. 5). In that respect, artists and academics have a common goal: to influence their peers, their primary audience. In the art world, peer recognition and expert judgment correlate positively with art auction prices (Galenson, 2005a). In academia, peer recognition correlates positively with citation counts (e.g., Garfield & Welljams-Dorof, 1992; Smith & Eysenck, 2002). Reading Galenson's studies caused us to wonder if, for instance, two discrete patterns of age-related innovation, comparable with those he discovered in his art historical studies, also might be found among academic researchers. We are not positing direct equivalence between artists and authors nor do we really expect to unearth the clear-cut differences

---

Received October 12, 2006; revised December 11, 2006; accepted January 29, 2007

© 2007 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. • Published online 3 August 2007 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/asi.20667

between conceptualists and experimentalists that Galenson did—dramatic innovation in art is possible in part because the rules and conventions of art, unlike the rules of science, can—given a healthy cocktail of imagination and self-confidence—simply be brushed aside: Just think of Cubism or Dada. However, we do acknowledge that Galenson’s overarching theoretical framework both stimulated and shaped our thinking.

## Approach and Methods

We present here a preliminary bibliometric exploration of the creative life cycles of leading information scientists. Our approach can be applied to any discipline or field; we have chosen for reasons of convenience to work with a community we know well.

Galenson (2003b) identified important artists and their most influential paintings by counting how often their works were reproduced in leading art history books. Reproductions function, in effect, as citations, allowing one to rank both different artists’ relative perceived significance and also to establish the degree of consensus among art historians, critics, and curators as to individual artists’ most important paintings. Some great artists are synonymous with iconic paintings (e.g., Picasso with *Les Femmes d’Alger* and *Guernica*) while other members of the pantheon are not: “Mondrian was a master without a dominant masterpiece,” as Galenson (2005b, p. 9) observed pithily. In addition, there are those, such as Géricault and Grant Wood (*The Raft of the Medusa* and *American Gothic*, respectively) whom Galenson (2005c) described as “one-hit wonders,” a phenomenon that certainly is not peculiar to painters.

This modest study is a first attempt to look for information science’s Picassos, Mondrians, and Géricaults. Our focus, it need hardly be said, is on publications rather than paintings. Naturally, we caution against overdrawing the parallels between the products and personalities of the two worlds. For instance, coauthorship is common practice in many academic disciplines, but co-creation in the plastic arts is not: There are, to be sure, exceptions (e.g., Gilbert & George and the Chapman brothers are major figures in the contemporary British art scene), and of course, some celebrated artists, from Rubens to Warhol, relied to a greater or lesser extent on the painterly and production skills of members of their atelier or entourage, but when we think of painting we think typically of originary genius and individual expression.

Instead of counting how often canonical artists’ works are reproduced, we count the frequency with which notable information scientists’ publications are cited over time; instead of identifying the most frequently reproduced paintings, we identify the most highly cited publications within an author’s output. We also determine when these works were produced (i.e., early or late in an author’s career) and calculate their relative impact to explore, as Galenson (2006, pp. 23–24) did, the relationship between stage of life and quality of work.

In fields such as physics or biology, as Lehman (1953) demonstrated, it is not difficult to identify papers or patents reporting discoveries which have had an impact on the scientific community equivalent to that of, say, Jasper Johns’ *Flag* or Andy Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Can* on the development of modern art. Authors of such blockbusters will not only be highly cited over time but also will have accumulated encomia and prizes of one kind or another, just as leading artists do. Information science—and in saying this we trust we are not held to be suffering from physics envy—is a much humbler enterprise than either the physical or life sciences, and little of the field’s research radically changes the way we view the world. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that among the lifetime contributions of the field’s grandees, there will be some publications (“individual masterpieces,” to use Galenson’s term, 2003a, p. 14) that have had exceptional intrafield impact, papers that have shaped or redirected thinking within particular specialties, or alternatively, a corpus (“body of work”) that has been cumulatively influential (see Bates, 2005). Note that scholars in information science tend not to have significant extrafield impact (Cronin & Pearson, 1990).

We want to find out what those “masterpieces” are, who produced them and when they were published, in the process establishing whether our sample of grandees—the presumptive innovators of the title—belong to the broadly defined experimentalist category, the conceptualist category, or neither. This approach is quite different in intention from our recent application of the *h*-index to a number of leading information scientists (Cronin & Meho, 2006). We are not focusing here primarily on individual scholars’ citation counts or undertaking comparative rankings; rather, we are looking for general patterns, or timelines, of creativity within a particular intellectual community. In short, we are using citation data to capture the *shape* of people’s careers—performance age-curves in Lehman’s (1953, pp. 70–85) language.

Our sample of 12 academics is drawn from the lists of those who have won either the American Society for Information Science and Technology (*ASIST*) Award of Merit (the Society’s highest honor) or the Research in Information Science award, or both (for background information on these awards, see: <http://www.asis.org/awards/winners.html>). All 12 individuals—Marcia Bates, Nicholas Belkin, Blaise Cronin, Raya Fidel, Paul Kantor, Carol Kuhlthau, Gary Marchionini, Tefko Saracevic, Dagobert Soergel, Don Swanson, Carol Tenopir, and Howard White—are recognizable members of the information science community and active researchers. Even those who are officially retired (e.g., Bates, Swanson) continue to conduct research and publish regularly in the scholarly literature. Two members of our sample (Kantor, Swanson) trained as physicists before switching to information science, and both have a small number of publications in the mainstream physics literature. The youngest author in the mix is Tenopir (age 54), the oldest Swanson (age 82). The average age is 65 years.

We used several biographical sources (e.g., *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*), a number of databases

(e.g., *Dissertations and Theses*), and the *curricula vitae* of the authors to collect year of birth and dissertation information. We used *Web of Science* and the authors' lists of publications to identify high-impact works and compute cumulative citation counts. The lists of publications were particularly useful in the cases of those authors with relatively common names (e.g., Cronin, Swanson, White) and those who made a switch in their careers. The lists of publications also were useful for accurately identifying citations to nonjournal items (e.g., conference papers, chapters, monographs, and reports), as these types of materials are often cited by authors, and consequently entered into *Web of Science*, in a variety of different ways.

Because we wanted to establish the relationship between age (chronological and professional) and creativity for each author, we limited our analysis to items in which our sample members were first authors. Citations to works with multiple editions (e.g., Kuhlthau's 1993 and 2003 *Seeking Meaning*) were merged into one count and credited for the year in which the book first appeared. Citations to journal articles published in parts also were merged into one count (e.g., Belkin, 1982; Fidel, 1991; Saracevic, 1988; see the Appendix for a full listing of works). Self-citations, which on average account for approximately 7% of the total citations of an author in information science (Cronin & Meho, 2006), are included in this study. The data were collected twice (in September 2006) to ensure accuracy.

## Results and Discussion

We gathered two kinds of data for each author in our sample: (a) the number of high-impact works (masterpieces, to sustain the painterly analogy), and (b) cumulative citation counts (a proxy for reputation or public visibility) from the date of the author's first citation in *Web of Science* (see Table 1). The counts are limited to first-author items. High-impact works were those cited 40 times or more. The definition is, of course, arbitrary, but for a small field such as information science, it seems not unreasonable. For each author, we show the date of publication and the number of citations accruing to each high-impact work. The date at which authors were awarded their Ph.D. also is indicated on both timelines; the average age was 33 years.

Professional age is usually defined as age since award of doctorate. We modified this approach very slightly because a couple of individuals (Belkin, Cronin) had produced highly cited works prior to completion of their Ph.D. (see Table 1). In this article, we show authors' creativity by stage of career (mid, early, late). The number of high-impact works for each stage and the percentage of total citations accounted for by those works are shown in Table 2. We define early career as up to 10 years post-Ph.D., midcareer as the subsequent decade, and late career as all years thereafter. Together, Tables 1 and 2 allow the reader to view each author's creativity as a function of both chronological and professional age.

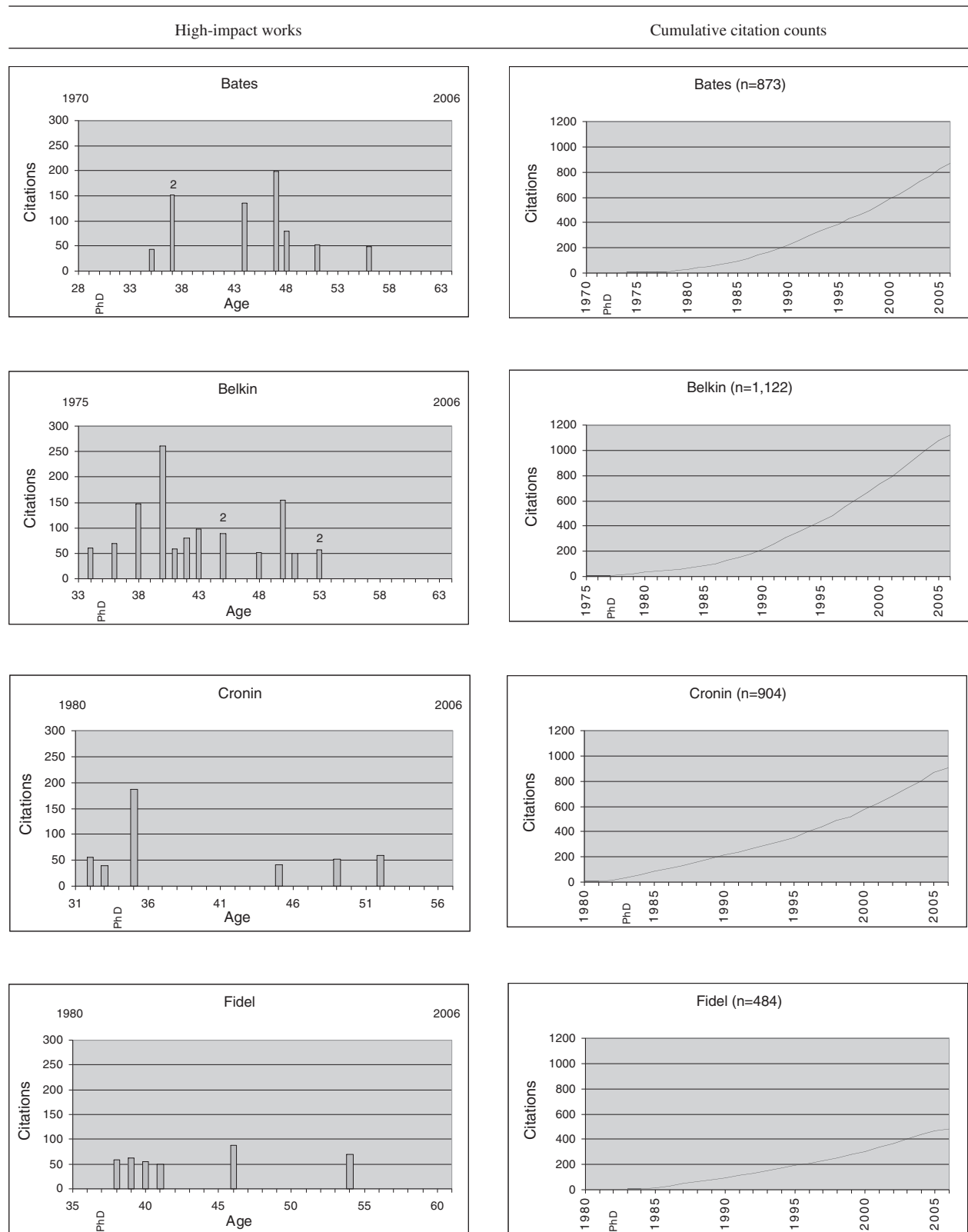
Visual inspection of Table 1 (high-impact works) allows us to see at a glance when different scholars produced their most influential works (Chronological and professional ages are recorded on the  $x$  axis.), how many significant works were produced over the course of a career, and the frequency with which each of their high-impact papers was cited (the  $y$  axis). The range for high-impact works was 2 to 14: Belkin had both the largest number of high-impact papers as well as the single most highly cited publication (Belkin, Oddy, & Brooks, 1982), which was cited 261 times. The complete list of highly cited works ( $N = 74$ ) is shown in the Appendix; Table 3 lists these works by place of publication. Some 22 of the highly cited works (30%) were published in the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 6 appeared in the *Journal of Documentation*, 3 each in *Information Processing & Management*, *Journal of Information Science*, *Library Quarterly*, and *Online Review*, and 2 each in *Library & Information Science Research*, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* and *Proceedings of the ASIS Annual Meeting*. The rest were singletons, with the exception of 9 books and 2 book chapters.

The second set of plots in Table 1 shows the cumulative citation counts for each author (range = 295–1,122). Once again, visual inspection allows us to appreciate differences in the gradients of the curves and the points at which inflections occurred over the trajectory of an author's academic career. Note that all things being equal, those who have been in the field longest should have the highest citation counts. Given the age range (54–82 years), the late stage of a career can vary appreciably in terms of elapsed time; for example, Swanson's late career began in 1972 while Tenpoir's started in 2004.

The 12 timelines describe the shape of each author's career, and are quite varied. Belkin's profile resembles the Manhattan skyline, attesting to persistent influence over more than a quarter-century. White's profile is rather different, with three periods of particularly significant activity, in his 30s, 40s, and 50s. In Kuhlthau's case, her high-impact publications came relatively late in life (Her Ph.D. was awarded at a correspondingly late age, 46.), but early in terms of her professional career. Some 86% of her total citations are to high-impact works she published within 10 years of receiving her Ph.D. This is higher than any other individual: Belkin (59%) and Fidel (51%) came next (see Table 2).

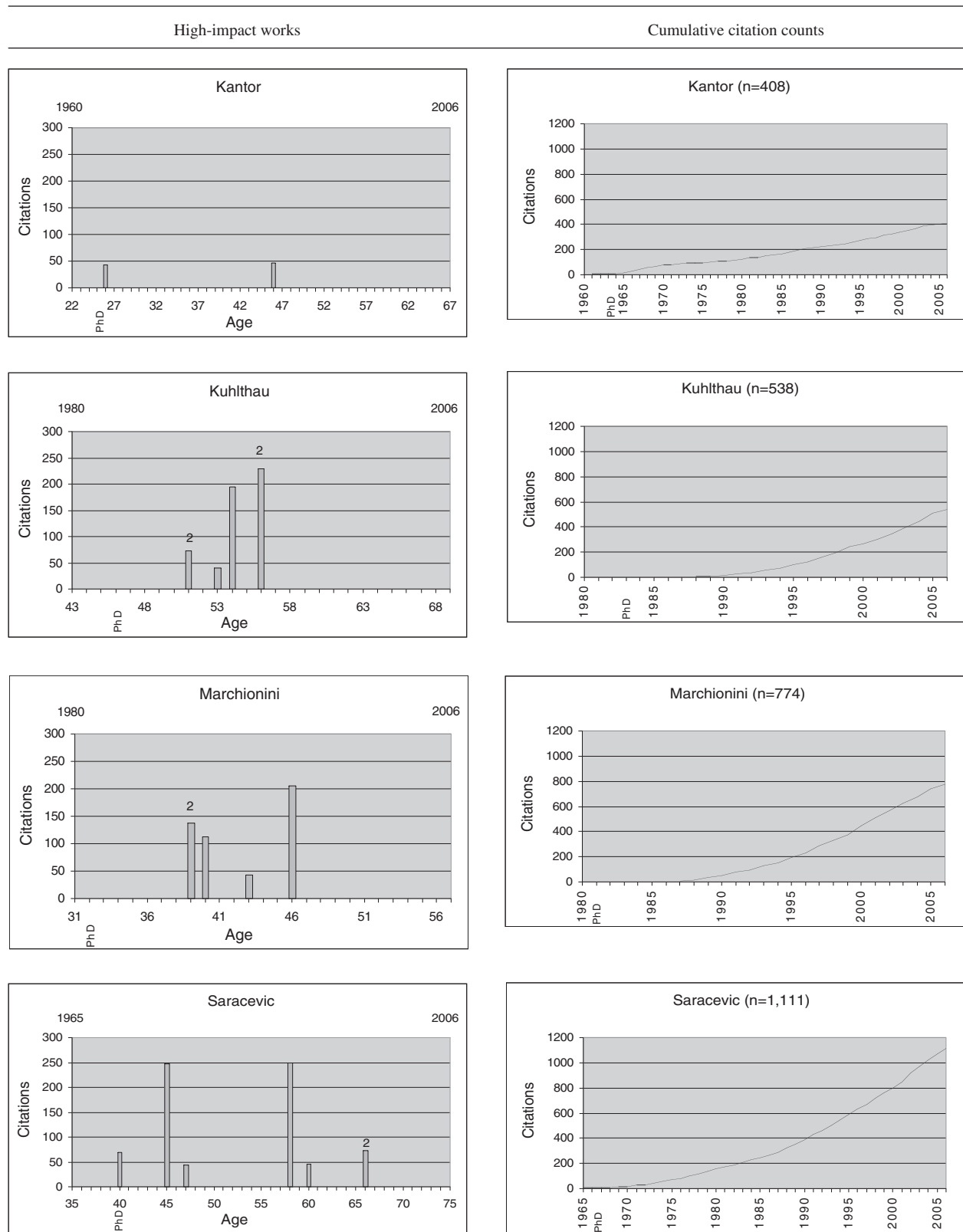
Saracevic produced four of his seven high-impact publications between his 58th and 66th year when many scholars might be tempted to throttle back. Bates, Saracevic, and White's high-impact publications are distributed more or less equally across their time-in-field (see Tables 1 and 2). Swanson produced his most influential works in the twilight of his career, in his 60s and 70s. For Cronin and Fidel, high-impact publications occur around the time the terminal degree was awarded, though both have continued to produce high-impact works into their 50s. This is as one might expect; the doctorate represents a major investment of time and intellectual energy, and it is often a launch pad for a research

TABLE 1. High-impact works and cumulative citation counts.



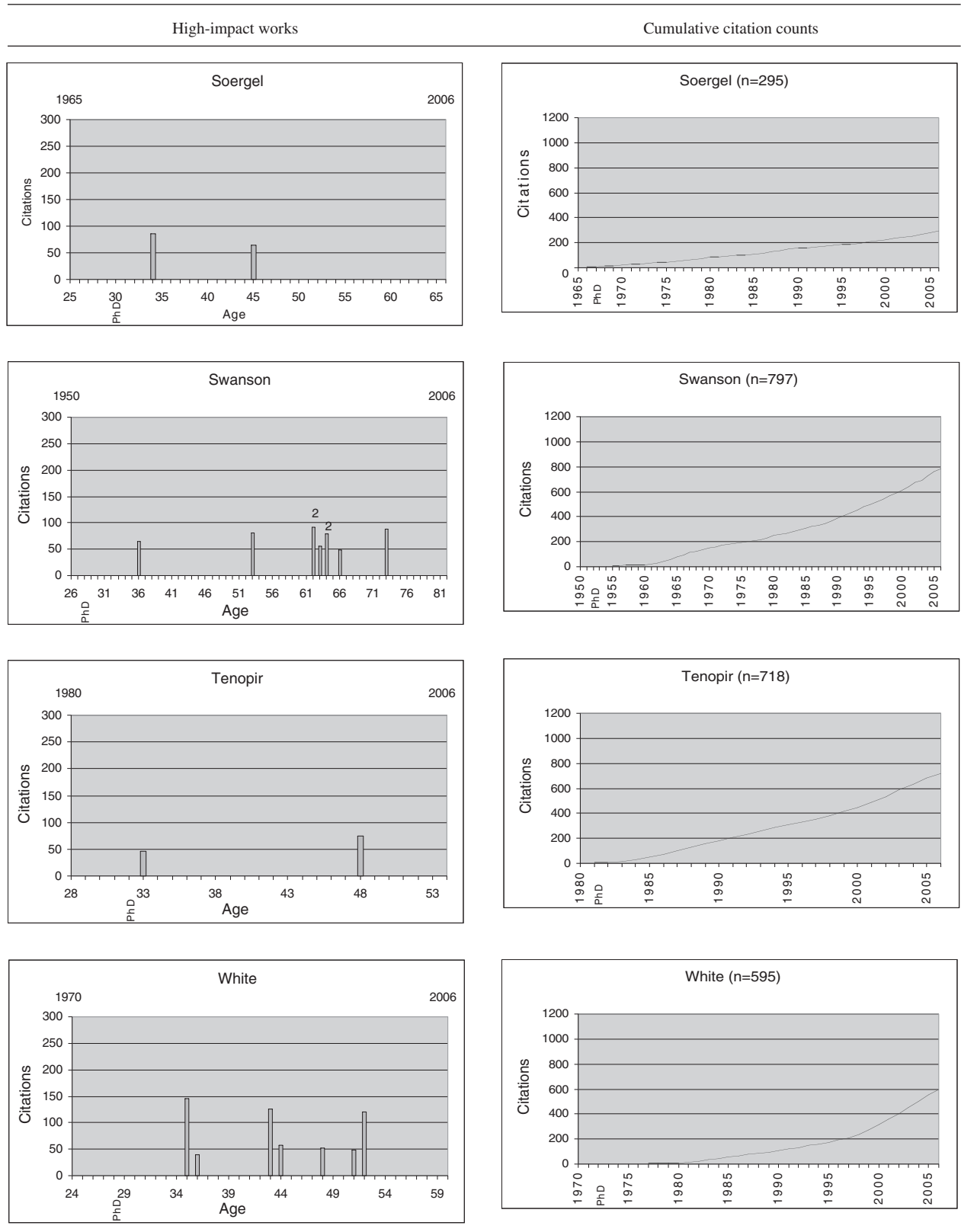
*continued*

TABLE 1. (Continued)



*continued*

TABLE 1. (Continued)



There were nine cases where two highly cited works were published in the same year. These are noted on top of the columns in the charts; in such cases, the height of the column reflects that of the higher cited work. For example, Bates had two highly cited works in 1979: One was cited 74 times and the other 151 times. The column for 1979 shows that there were “2” highly cited works in that year, and the higher of the two was cited 151 times.

TABLE 2. Proportion of citations attributable to each author's high-impact publications by stage of career.

Author and total citation count	Early career		Mid-career		Late career	
	No. high-impact works	%	No. high-impact works	%	No. high-impact works <sup>a</sup>	%
Bates (873)	3	23.6	3	41.8	2 (1992)	11.5
Belkin (1,122)	9	59.2	5	29.0	– (1998)	–
Cronin (904)	3	28.1	3	14.6	– (2003)	–
Fidel (484)	5	50.8	1	14.3	– (2002)	–
Kantor (408)	1	10.5	–	–	1 (1984)	11.3
Kuhlthau (538)	6	86.4	–	–	– (2003)	–
Marchionini (774)	3	38.0	2	35.3	– (2001)	–
Saracevic (1,111)	3	31.1	2	25.1	2 (1990)	10.9
Soergel (295)	1	28.8	1	21.7	– (1990)	–
Swanson (797)	1	8.0	–	–	8 (1972)	48.3
Tenopir (718)	1	6.5	1	10.3	– (2004)	–
White (595)	2	26.2	3	36.5	2 (1994)	23.9

<sup>a</sup>Year between parentheses represents the date late career started for each author.

This table should be read as follows: Of all 538 citations that Kuhlthau received for all of her publications, 86.4% of them were to the six high-impact works she published in her early career stage.

program that results in sustained, downstream publication, as we see with Belkin.

One thing is clear from the data: This is not a field that produces *Wunderkinder*, bright young things who make their mark at a precocious age. In fact, some of our sample members have kept their best wine until last. Creativity in academic information science is clearly not the preserve of callow youth, and no one pattern of productivity characterizes the in-

novators in our sample. Stage of life and quality of work do not at first blush appear to be tightly coupled. Additionally, the data seem to support Adkins and Budd's (2006) contention that "productive faculty tend to remain productive throughout their careers, and that faculty whose research is highly cited remain influential throughout their careers" (p. 384).

However, it might be countered that the evolution of the Internet and World Wide Web has resulted in numerous opportunities for, and concrete examples of, innovation and entrepreneurial verve by young minds and that our study is, to quote one referee, "restricted by construction to senior members of the profession." We do not for a moment deny that the Internet has stimulated waves of creativity; one only has to think of youthful, household names such as Marc Anderssen (developer of Mosaic), Sergey Brin and Larry Page (cofounders of Google), and Jimmy Wales (founder of Wikipedia). But each of these creative minds dropped out of higher education to pursue their dreams unfettered by the norms and expectations of academe. Their insights and inventions will likely have much greater impact on society at large than will the contributions of any or all of the 12 professors in our sample. But that is to miss the point of the present study, which focuses on patterns of productivity and creativity within a traditional academic environment where, often but by no means always, an author's scholarly contributions (often but not always publications) and impact can be assessed only with the benefit of hindsight. To return to the analogy with art for a moment: Andy Warhol was indeed recognized as an *enfant terrible* during his lifetime, but it is only by posthumous analysis of his legacy (as reflected in exhibitions, sale room prices, etc.) that one can appreciate fully the enduring nature of his innovative, conceptual contributions, relative to his coeval peers and also other artists of historical note. Not all young stars burn brightly and persistently (Damien Hirst is one whose reputation continues to

TABLE 3. Place of publication of high-impact works.

Source/publisher information	No. of articles
<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i>	22
<i>Journal of Documentation</i>	6
<i>Annual Review of Information Science and Technology</i>	3
<i>Information Processing &amp; Management</i>	3
<i>Journal of Information Science</i>	3
<i>Library Quarterly</i>	3
<i>Online Review</i>	3
<i>Library &amp; Information Science Research</i>	2
<i>Perspectives in Biology and Medicine</i>	2
<i>Proceedings of the ASIS Annual Meeting</i>	2
<i>Artificial Intelligence</i>	1
<i>Bulletin of the Medical Library Association</i>	1
<i>Canadian Journal of Information Science</i>	1
<i>CoLIS, conference paper in</i>	1
<i>College &amp; Research Libraries</i>	1
<i>Communications of the ACM</i>	1
<i>Computer</i>	1
<i>Educational Technology</i>	1
<i>Expert Systems With Applications</i>	1
<i>International Journal of Man-Machine Studies</i>	1
<i>Physical Review Letters</i>	1
<i>RQ</i>	1
<i>Science</i>	1
<i>Social Science Information Studies</i>	1
Books	9
Book chapters	2

glow, but for every Hirst, there are many “6-day wonders”); some fade quickly from view, and others simply fall from grace as fashions and evaluative criteria change.

When we turn our attention to the cumulative frequency data (Table 1), we see that an author can have a high citation count (i.e., body of work), but a relatively low number of high-impact publications (i.e., individual masterpieces). For example, Tenopir has only two high-impact publications (separated in her case by 15 years), yet her career output has attracted 718 citations in total. One reason for this kind of profile is the inclusion of citations to columns or Op-Ed pieces in professional journals, in addition to citations earned by scholarly publications (see Adkins & Budd, 2006, p. 378; Meho, & Spurgin, 2005, p. 1328). Marchionini, for his part, has five high-impact publications, but none in the last decade; yet, his cumulative citation count ( $N = 774$ ) continues to grow steadily. This also is the case with Kantor and Soergel. Combined, the histograms and cumulative frequency distributions allow us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the nature and stages of scholarly creativity.

Table 4 shows the proportion of citations accounted for by each author’s high-impact publications. The number of such works ranges from 2 to 14, and the percentage of total citations ranges from 17 to 86%. Some authors’ citations are concentrated on a set of high-impact papers: Kuhlthau’s six and White’s seven publications account for 86 and 73% of all citations to their work, respectively. Other authors exhibit moderate concentration: Swanson’s nine and Marchionini’s five high-impact publications account for 55 and 67%, respectively, of their totals. Almost half (49%) of Soergel’s citations are attributable to two high-impact publications whereas Tenopir’s brace accounts for only 17% of her career citation count. These data suggest that in some cases (e.g., Bates, Belkin, Kuhlthau, White), a relatively small body of work accounts for much of a scholar’s overall impact on the field’s thinking—a classic Pareto-like distribution. In other

cases, an author’s impact may be less closely associated in the minds of his or her peers with a small cluster of publications than with a significant body of work distributed over the course of a career (e.g., Kantor, Tenopir).

Several scholars (Belkin, Cronin, Saracevic, Soergel, White) produced one work that accounted for 20% or more of their total citations within a decade of being awarded their Ph.D. Belkin’s (1982) most highly cited work, “ASK for information retrieval,” was published 5 years after he received his Ph.D.; Cronin’s most highly cited work, *The Citation Process*, was published a year after he received his Ph.D.; Kuhlthau’s most highly cited work, “Inside the search process,” was published 8 years after she was awarded her Ph.D.; Saracevic’s most highly cited work, “Relevance: Review of and a framework for the thinking on the notion in information science,” was published 5 years after completion of his doctorate; Soergel’s most highly cited work, *Indexing Languages and Thesauri: Construction and Maintenance*, was published 4 years after he was awarded his D.Phil.; and White’s most highly cited paper, “Author cocitation: A literature measure of intellectual structure,” coauthored with Griffith, appeared 7 years after he received his Ph.D. It is not unreasonable to label these seminal contributions (with perhaps the exception of Soergel’s textbook) as essentially conceptual in character; they review existing theories and models and provide new ways of seeing or framing persistent problems, whether in information retrieval, information seeking, or citation analysis. Of course, the fact that several of these scholars have produced important theoretical work relatively early in their careers does not make them out-and-out conceptualists; most also have subsequently produced empirical work of one kind or another that tests or extends their early theoretical contributions.

Others in our sample (Kantor, Swanson, Tenopir) do not have in their portfolio a single work that accounts for as much as 15% of their total citations. Kantor’s most highly cited work is a monograph, *Objective Performance Measures for Academic and Research Libraries*; his only other highly cited work appeared in the physics literature a year after he completed his Ph.D. Swanson’s profile is ostensibly that of an experimentalist. Relatively late in his career, Swanson undertook empirical research to ground his influential concept of logically related but non-interconnecting literature sets, first laid out in his most highly cited paper, *Undiscovered public knowledge*. This was published a quarter-century after Swanson was awarded his Ph.D. Tenopir’s most highly cited work, *Towards Electronic Journals: Realities for Scientists, Librarians, and Publishers*, was published 15 years after she received her Ph.D. These three authors are perhaps more appropriately classified as experimentalists than as conceptualists, if we are to stick with a simple binary.

The three remaining members of the sample are Bates, Fidel, and Marchionini. Bates produced her most influential paper, “The design of browsing and berrypicking,” which accounts for more than 20% of her citations, 17 years after being awarded her Ph.D. Fidel’s most highly cited paper,

TABLE 4. Proportion of citations attributable to each author’s high-impact publications.

Name	Total no. of citations	No. of high-impact works	No. of times high-impact works cited	% of total citations
Belkin, Nicholas J.	1,122	14	900	80.2%
Saracevic, Tefko	1,111	7	655	59.0%
Cronin, Blaise	904	6	362	40.0%
Bates, Marcia J.	873	8	585	67.0%
Swanson, Don R.	797	9	438	55.0%
Marchionini, Gary	774	5	520	67.2%
Tenopir, Carol	718	2	120	16.7%
White, Howard D.	595	7	435	73.1%
Kuhlthau, Carol C.	538	6	465	86.4%
Fidel, Raya	484	6	309	63.8%
Kantor, Paul B.	408	2	89	21.8%
Soergel, Dagobert	295	2	144	48.8%
<i>M</i>	718.3	6.2	419.8	58.4%



“Searchers’ selection of search keys,” accounts for approximately 18% of her total citations and was published 9 years after she was awarded her doctorate. Marchionini published his most cited work, a textbook entitled *Information Seeking in Electronic Environments*, 14 years after receiving his Ph.D. His other highly cited works are mainly empirical in character.

Earlier, we characterized this distinction in the art world as conceptual versus experimental innovation. Of course, the material practices and, indeed, motivations of painters and professors differ in important respects. Some artists simply may have chosen not to refine or rework a particular technique or motif (as did Cézanne, Mondrian, and Pollock) but instead intentionally address a diversity of topics and themes over the course of a career. Some authors in our sample (the Picassos and Warhols of information science, if you will) have produced works that have had a demonstrably significant impact on teaching and research. This is shown clearly in the Appendix, which lists all the high-impact publications featured in our study. In some cases, one almost could substitute a concept for an author’s name (e.g., Bates and berry-picking; Belkin and ASK—anomalous states of knowledge; Kuhlthau and ISP—information search process; White and co-citation analysis). We are not for a moment suggesting that Bates is synonymous with a noun or that Belkin is reducible to an acronym, but are making the point that some people are very closely associated with certain key ideas that have influenced collective thinking and awareness in the field—one thinks here, by way of parallel, of Small’s (1978) characterization of cited documents as “concept symbols.”

Such individuals are close to what Galenson (2006) had in mind when he spoke of conceptual innovators. Other authors (experimentalists) have a more diffuse effect on their peers, calling to mind the comment of the photographer Annie Leibovitz (as cited in C. McGuigan, 2006), who said: “I’ve always thought the strength of my work has been in the body of the work” (p. 61). For her, the cumulative effect of her *oeuvre* takes precedence over the production of individual pieces that stand out. This also can be said of several of those in our sample (e.g., Kantor, Tenopir) whose contributions are perhaps more dispersed and varied in nature than those of others. We say “perhaps” because such a statement can be made with confidence only if one has checked every item in each author’s bibliography and determined the degree of topic coverage and overlap.

## Conclusions

Our data suggest that there may be two (very) broad categories of innovators in information science, just as Galenson (2006) found in his analyses of the history of art, but we—as he—would argue that it makes more sense to view creativity as a continuum, running from predominantly conceptual to predominantly experimental. In addition, it seems abundantly clear from our survey that intellectual innovation is

not a function of chronological age alone. The high-impact publications, not all of which are conceptual in character, produced by the 12 information scientists in our sample do not cluster neatly at either the opening or concluding stage of a career. Rather, the data in Tables 1 and 4 suggest that creativity is expressed in different ways, at different times, and with different intensities. Even if no one model fits, our fine-grained analysis of publication and citation data helps us better appreciate the nature of creative activity within information science and the various ways in which intellectual impact is exhibited over the life cycle of an academic career.

## Acknowledgment

We are grateful to Debora Shaw for reading an early draft and to an anonymous referee for a number of extremely thoughtful comments and helpful suggestions.

## References

- Adkins, D., & Budd, J. (2006). Scholarly productivity of U.S. LIS faculty. *Library & Information Science Research*, 28(3), 374–389.
- Bates, M.J. (2005). Information and knowledge: An evolutionary framework for information science. *Information Research*, 10(4). Available at: <http://InformationR.net/ir/10-4/paper239.html>
- Cronin, B., & Meho, L. (2006). Using the h-index to rank influential information scientists. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57(9), 1275–1278.
- Cronin, B., & Pearson, S. (1990). The export of ideas from information science. *Journal of Information Science*, 16(6), 381–391.
- Galenson, D.W. (2003a). The two life cycles of human creativity. NBER Research, Fall, 12–15.
- Galenson, D.W. (2003b). The life cycles of modern artists: Theory, measurement, and implications. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w9539>
- Galenson, D.W. (2004). The life cycles of modern artists: Theory and implications. *Historical Methods*, 37(3), 123–136.
- Galenson, D.W. (2005a). Who are the greatest living artists? The view from the auction market. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper No. 11644. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11644>
- Galenson, D.W. (2005b). Toward abstraction: Ranking European painters of the early twentieth century. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper No. 11501. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11501>
- Galenson, D.W. (2006). Old masters and young geniuses: The two life cycles of artistic creativity. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Garfield, E., & Welljams-Dorof, A. (1992). Of Nobel class: A citation perspective on high impact research authors. *Theoretical Medicine*, 13(2), 117–135.
- Lehman, H.C. (1953). Age and achievement. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- McGuigan, C. (2006, October 2). Through her lens. *Newsweek*, 58–62.
- Meho, L.I., & Spurgin, K.M. (2005). Ranking the research productivity of LIS faculty and schools: An evaluation of data sources and research methods. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 56(12), 1314–1331.
- Small, H. (1978). Cited documents as concept symbols. *Social Studies of Science*, 8, 327–340.
- Smith, A., & Eysenck, M. (2002). The correlation between RAE ratings and citation counts in psychology. Available at: <http://cogprints.org/2749/>

## Appendix. High-Impact Works Studied

Author	Year	Title	Source/publisher information	Times cited
Bates, M.J.	1977	Factors affecting subject catalog search success.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 28(3), 161–169.	44
Bates, M.J.	1979	Information search tactics.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 30(4), 205–214.	151
Bates, M.J.	1979	Idea tactics.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 30(5), 280–289.	74
Bates, M.J.	1986	Subject access in online catalogs—A design-model.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 37(6), 357–376.	136
Bates, M.J.	1989	The design of browsing and berrypicking techniques for the online search interface.	<i>Online Review</i> 13(5), 407–424.	199
Bates, M.J.	1990	Where should the person stop and the information search interface start?	<i>Information Processing &amp; Management</i> , 26(5), 575–591.	80
Bates, M.J., Wilde, D.N., & Siegfried, S.	1993	An analysis of search terminology used by humanities scholars—The Getty Online Searching Project Report-1.	<i>Library Quarterly</i> , 63(1), 1–39.	53
Bates, M.J.	1998	Indexing and access for digital libraries and the Internet: Human, database, and domain factors.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 49(13), 1185–1205.	49
Belkin, N.J., & Robertson, S.E.	1976	Information-science and phenomenon of information.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 27(4), 197–204.	61
Belkin, N.J.	1978	Information concepts for information-science.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 34(1), 55–85.	69
Belkin, N.J.	1980	Anomalous states of knowledge as a basis for information-retrieval.	<i>Canadian Journal of Information Science</i> , 5, 133–143.	147
Belkin, N.J., Oddy, R.N., & Brooks, H.M.	1982	Ask for information-retrieval: 1. Background and theory; 2. Results of a design study.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 38(2), 61–71; 38(3), 145–164.	261
Belkin, N.J., Seeger, T., & Wersig, G.	1983	Distributed expert problem treatment as a model for information-system analysis and design.	<i>Journal of Information Science</i> , 5(5), 153–167.	58
Belkin, N.J.	1984	Cognitive models and information-transfer.	<i>Social Science Information Studies</i> , 4(2–3), 111–129.	80
Belkin, N.J.	1985	Interaction in information systems: A review of research from document retrieval to knowledge-based systems.	London: British Library.	97
Belkin, N.J., & Croft, W.B.	1987	Retrieval techniques.	<i>Annual Review of Information Science and Technology</i> , 22, 109–145.	89
Belkin, N.J., Brooks, H.M., & Daniels, P.J.	1987	Knowledge elicitation using discourse analysis.	<i>International Journal of Man–Machine Studies</i> , 27(2), 127–144.	53
Belkin, N.J.	1990	The cognitive viewpoint in information-science.	<i>Journal of Information Science</i> , 16(1), 11–15.	52
Belkin, N.J., & Croft, W.B.	1992	Information filtering and information-retrieval—2 sides of the same coin.	<i>Communications of the ACM</i> , 35(12), 29–38.	155
Belkin, N.J., Marchetti, P.G., & Cool, C.	1993	Braque—Design of an interface to support user interaction in information-retrieval.	<i>Information Processing &amp; Management</i> , 29(3), 325–344.	50
Belkin, N.J., Cool, C., Stein, A., & Thiel, U.	1995	Cases, scripts, and information-seeking strategies—On the design of interactive information-retrieval systems.	<i>Expert Systems with Applications</i> , 9(3), 379–395.	56
Belkin, N.J., Kantor, P., Fox, E.A., & Shaw, J.A.	1995	Combining the evidence of multiple query representations for information-retrieval.	<i>Information Processing &amp; Management</i> , 31(3), 431–448.	48
Cronin, B.	1981	The need for a theory of citing.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 37(1), 16–24.	55
Cronin, B.	1982	Invisible colleges and information transfer: A review and commentary with particular reference to the social-sciences.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 38(3), 212–236.	40
Cronin, B.	1984	The citation process: The role and significance of citations in scientific communication.	London: Taylor Graham.	186

continued

Appendix. (Continued)

Author	Year	Title	Source/publisher information	Times cited
Cronin, B., & Overfelt, K.	1994	Citation-based auditing of academic-performance	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 45(2), 61–72.	41
Cronin, B., Snyder, H.W., Rosenbaum H., Martinson, A., & Callahan, E.	1998	Invoked on the Web.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 49(14), 1319–1328.	52
Cronin, B.	2001	Bibliometrics and beyond: some thoughts on Web-based citation analysis.	<i>Journal of Information Science</i> , 27(1), 1–7.	60
Fidel, R., & Soergel, D.	1983	Factors affecting online bibliographic retrieval: A conceptual-framework for research.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 34(3), 163–180.	58
Fidel, R.	1984	Online searching styles: A case-study-based model of searching behavior.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 35(4), 211–221.	62
Fidel, R.	1985	Moves in online searching.	<i>Online Review</i> , 9(1), 61–74.	55
Fidel, R.	1986	Towards expert systems for the selection of search keys.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 37(1), 37–44.	50
Fidel, R.	1991	Searchers selection of search keys: 1. The selection routine; 2. Controlled vocabulary or free-text searching; 3. Searching styles.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 42(7), 490–500; 42(7), 501–514; 42(7), 515–527.	88
Fidel, R., et al.	1999	A visit to the information mall: Web searching behavior of high school students.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 50(1), 24–37.	69
Kantor, P.B.	1964	Nucleon–nucleon scattering + meson resonances.	<i>Physical Review Letters</i> , 12(2), 52–54.	43
Kantor, P.B.	1984	Objective performance measures for academic and research libraries.	Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.	46
Kuhlthau, C.C.	1988	Developing a model of the library search process: cognitive and affective aspects.	<i>RQ</i> , 28(2), 232–242.	72
Kuhlthau, C.C.	1988	Longitudinal case studies of the information search process of users in libraries.	<i>Library &amp; Information Science Research</i> , 10(3), 257–304.	44
Kuhlthau, C.C., Turock, B.J., George, M.W., & Belvin, R.J.	1990	Validating a model of the search process: A comparison of academic, public and school library users.	<i>Library &amp; Information Science Research</i> , 12(1), 5–31.	40
Kuhlthau, C.C.	1991	Inside the search process: Information seeking from the users perspective.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 42(5), 361–371.	194
Kuhlthau, C.C.	1993	A principle of uncertainty for information-seeking.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 49(4), 339–355.	64
Kuhlthau, C.C.	1993	Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information services.	Norwood, NJ: Ablex.	229
Marchionini, G.	1988	Hypermedia and learning: Freedom and chaos.	<i>Educational Technology</i> , 28(11), 8–12.	59
Marchionini, G., & Shneiderman, B.	1988	Finding facts vs. browsing knowledge in hypertext systems.	<i>Computer</i> , 21(1), 70–80.	138
Marchionini, G.	1989	Information-seeking strategies of novices using a full-text electronic encyclopedia.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 40(1), 54–66.	112
Marchionini, G.	1992	Interfaces for end-user information seeking.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 43(2), 156–163.	43
Marchionini, G.	1995	Information seeking in electronic environments.	Cambridge University Press: England	206
Saracevic, T.	1970	Introduction to information science.	New York: Bowker.	70
Saracevic, T.	1975	Relevance: Review of and a framework for thinking on notion in information science.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 26(6), 321–343.	248
Saracevic, T., Shaw, W.M., & Kantor, P.B.	1977	Causes and dynamics of user frustration in an academic library.	<i>College &amp; Research Libraries</i> , 38(1), 17–18.	44

continued

Appendix. (Continued)

Author	Year	Title	Source/publisher information	Times cited
Saracevic, T., Kantor, P., Chamis, A.Y., & Trivison, D.	1988	A study of information seeking and retrieving: 1. Background and methodology; 2. Users, questions, and effectiveness; 3. Searchers, searches, and overlap.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 39(3), 161–176; 39(3), 177–196; 39(3), 197–216.	249
Saracevic, T., Mokros, H., & Su, L.	1990	Nature of interaction between users and intermediaries in online searching: A qualitative analysis.	<i>Proceedings of the ASIS Annual Meeting</i> , 27, 47–54.	46
Saracevic, T.	1996	Modeling interaction in information retrieval (IR): A review and proposal.	<i>Proceedings of the ASIS Annual Meeting</i> , 33, 3–9.	59
Saracevic, T.	1996	Relevance reconsidered.	Conceptions of library and information science: Integration in perspective: CoLIS 2—International conference. Copenhagen: Royal School of Librarianship.	72
Soergel, D.	1974	Indexing languages and thesauri: Construction and maintenance.	Los Angeles: Melville.	85
Soergel, D.	1985	Organizing information: Principles of data base and retrieval systems.	Orlando, FL: Academic Press.	64
Swanson, D.R.	1960	Searching natural language text by computer. Machine indexing and text searching offer an approach to the basic problems of library automation.	<i>Science</i> , 132, 1099–1104.	64
Swanson, D.R.	1977	Information retrieval as a trial-and-error process.	<i>Library Quarterly</i> , 47(2), 128–148.	81
Swanson, D.R.	1986	Undiscovered public knowledge.	<i>Library Quarterly</i> , 56(2), 103–118.	64
Swanson, D.R.	1986	Fish oil, Raynaud's syndrome and undiscovered public knowledge.	<i>Perspectives in Biology and Medicine</i> , 30(1), 7–18.	91
Swanson, D.R.	1987	Two medical literatures that are logically but not bibliographically connected	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 38(4), 228–233.	56
Swanson, D.R.	1988	Historical note: Information retrieval and the future of an illusion.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 39(2), 92–98.	67
Swanson, D.R.	1988	Migraine and magnesium eleven neglected connections.	<i>Perspectives in Biology and Medicine</i> , 31(4), 526–566.	79
Swanson, D.R.	1990	Medical literature as a potential source of new knowledge.	<i>Bulletin of the Medical Library Association</i> , 78(1), 29–37.	49
Swanson, D.R., & Smalheiser, N.R.	1997	An interactive system for finding complementary literatures: A stimulus to scientific discovery.	<i>Artificial Intelligence</i> , 91(2), 183–203.	88
Tenopir, C.	1985	Full text database retrieval performance.	<i>Online Review</i> , 9(2), 149–164.	47
Tenopir, C.K.D.W.	2000	Towards electronic journals: Realities for scientists, librarians, and publishers.	Washington, DC: Special Libraries Association.	74
White, H.D., & Griffith, B. C.	1981	Author cocitation: A literature measure of intellectual structure.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 32(3), 163–171.	146
White, H.D., & Griffith, B.C.	1982	Authors as markers of intellectual space: Co-citation in studies of science, technology and society.	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> , 38(4), 255–272.	40
White, H.D., & McCain, K.W.	1989	Bibliometrics.	<i>Annual Review of Information Science and Technology</i> , 24, 119–186.	125
White, H.D.	1990	Author co-citation analysis: Overview and defense.	In C.L. Borgman (Ed.), <i>Scholarly communication and bibliometrics</i> (pp. 84–106). Newbury Park: Sage.	58
White, H.D.	1994	Scientific communication and literature retrieval.	In H. Cooper & L. Hedges (Eds.), <i>The Handbook of research synthesis</i> (pp. 41–55). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.	52
White, H.D., & McCain, K.W.	1997	Visualization of literatures.	<i>Annual Review of Information Science and Technology</i> , 32, 99–168.	49
White, H.D., & McCain, K.W.	1998	Visualizing a discipline: An author co-citation analysis of information science, 1972–1995.	<i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science</i> , 49(4), 327–355.	121