Forensics research has traditionally been an empirical pursuit. Researchers have used tournament results sheets, video and audio recordings of actual rounds, judges’ critiques, and other direct evidence to investigate trends in forensic competition. This reliance on direct, primary sources is a natural outgrowth of two characteristics.

First, many forms of forensic competition are quite young. The venerable tradition of the Interstate Oratorical Association is the exception rather than the rule; for the most part, the established forensics organizations, especially in individual events, are only a few decades old. As a result the organizations have not grown to the level of retaining huge bodies of historical data. There simply are not encyclopedic resources for forensics history which researchers, their departments, or university libraries can purchase. Researchers, without this level of documented historical background, have had to rely heavily on new data for their investigations.

Second, forensics is largely a world unto itself. No matter how much effort is made to model forensics to real world communications skills, the actual universe of coaches and students participating is small and tightly-knit. Information tends to be retained and transmitted more through oral tradition and informal records than in enduring, formally published materials. Even if enough data were available for detailed records of historical statistics in forensics, it is doubtful that a sufficient market would exist for professionally published reference materials. For a commercial publisher to be successful in publishing such a work, the price would have to be in the thousands of dollars. As a result, most research materials in existence are done by forensics practitioners using the resources of their own institutions. Market realities currently prevent the expansion of forensics publishing to include a broader audience and the involvement of more outside publishers.

Since the relative youth and small size of much of the forensics community has forced a high degree of reliance of primary sources for forensics research, very little documentation exists of the secondary sources available. What will follow is a brief discussion of the emerging


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secondary resources for forensics research and some suggestions of trends that may emerge.

To review the literature already in existence on a topic of interest in forensics, some manual searching, that is, paging through each issue of a given journal, is inevitable. Again, the relative youth and small size of much of the forensics community is at work here. So far, Argumentation and Advocacy\(^1\) (formerly the Journal of the American Forensic Association) is the only publication devoted solely to forensics which is indexed. Previous articles in this journal may be assessed using the Current Index to Journal in Education\(^2\), the Index to Journals in Communication Studies Through 1985\(^3\), or the online ERIC database\(^4\), where retrieval by author, title, and most importantly for literature reviews, by subject is possible.

Unfortunately, other influential publications such as the National Forensic Journal, are not currently indexed. As a result, unless a citation paper trail has already been created by a reference to an article in another article, there is seldom no alternative to manual searching. This is not a serious problem at present since there are relatively few issues of this journal to search, but the need for indexing will undoubtedly increase as the body of forensics research increases in size.

The prospects for full inclusion of forensics literature in the research tools housed in most university libraries are still not terribly good. Although as forensics literature increases in its influence and audience the case for its inclusion in print and online databases will grow stronger, there is always the problem of confusion of subject matter. The medical discipline of forensics still draws by far the greater amount of attention, sometimes to the point of eclipsing speech and debate competition entirely. A notable example is found in the Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory\(^5\), a major reference tool used by librarians in identifying journals to purchase in a given subject area. Argumentation and Advocacy is listed in the education section, but before its name change, it appeared in the medical section of the directory! The National Forensic Journal is still classified under medicine. A

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\(^1\)Argumentation and Advocacy, published by the American Forensic Association, c/o James Pratt, Department of Speech Communication, University of Wisconsin—River Falls, 54022.

\(^2\)Current Index to Journal in Education, published by Oryx Press, Phoenix, AZ, 85004.

\(^3\)Index to Journals in Communication Studies Through 1985, Ronald J. Matlon, ed., published by the Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Road, Building E, Annandale, VA., 22003.

\(^4\)Available as file #1 through Dialogue Information Services, Palo Alto, CA.

librarian or researcher attempting to identify journals in our field would miss this journal because of this error, and since no other forensics journals are listed, would not be able to identify any of the professional literature which coaches and graduate students rely on.

Until the forensics community is able to create a distinct academic identity, these problems will undoubtedly continue to limit traditional library access to forensics information. Secondary sources of information therefore have to be obtained less formally through direct contact with those individuals and organizations who have archived historical data on forensics. What follows below is a partial list of some of the existing sources of information.

Currently, the major forensic associations themselves are a worthwhile source of historical data. With varying degrees of completeness, the leagues and associations sponsoring national tournaments have records of previous tournament results and entries since their beginnings. In addition, regional associations which sponsor tournaments throughout the regular season, such as the Metropolitan Washington Communication Association, the Twin Cities Forensic League, the Great Eastern Tournaments, and others, can offer historical records of the tournaments they have sponsored.

In the past few years, organizations have added videotape records of the final rounds at national tournaments. While copyright problems currently prevents the taping of interpretation events, these videotapes, which are already widely used for instructional purposes, could also be of value in providing several consecutive years' worth of final round materials to be studied.

Two major works now compile data from several tournaments sponsored by different organizations to provide an historical record of an entire forensics season. Since 1986, the Speech Communication Association has published Championship Debates and Speeches, an annual book which includes the transcripts of the final rounds of national debate tournaments and of winning speeches in individual events. In addition, whenever possible, judges' critiques of the winning speeches are included. A shift has begun in the past two years toward verbatim comments from the actual ballots instead of comments written after the tournament specifically for the publication.

While Championship Debates and Speeches and the videotapes provide an excellent overview of the text of championship speeches, one of the most thorough archival publications in forensics is devoted solely to tournament results and statistics. The Intercollegiate Speech Tournament

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*Championship Debates and Speeches*, edited by John K Boaz and James R. Brey, published by the Speech Communication Association, Annandale, VA.
Results\textsuperscript{7} book, begun in 1961, provides an annual record of results for nearly all individual events, CEDA, NDT, and Lincoln-Douglas tournaments. Dr. Seth C. Hawkins of Southern Connecticut State University, the current ISTR editor, is presently working to include parliamentary debate results as well.

The ISTR includes statistics for every recorded tournament on the top three speakers in each individual event and the top three debate teams in each division. Extensive statistical analysis precedes the actual results in a separate introductory section, including summaries of types of sweepstakes offered, event frequency, and tournament size. Perhaps the most interesting statistics are the results of the National Sweepstakes, a compilation of a full year's worth of results into a ranking for an entire year of competition.

In the 1989 edition of ISTR, guest contributor J.G. Harrington provides statistics on "the One Hundred Trophy Club," a listing of those competitors who have garnered 100 or more forensics awards during their college competitions. The table appearing in ISTR is drawn from a larger electronic database, which includes for each individual a bare minimum of name, school, last year of competition, and number of awards won. In some cases, the database also includes information about individual awards won.

The publication of ISTR was suspended for several years in the mid-1980's and only one complete set of all the published books, owned by the current editor, is known to exist. To improve this situation, Dr. Edward Harris of Suffolk University is currently investigating the preservation of all volumes of ISTR on microform. Having a second set of ISTR archived would better guarantee the preservation of this research tool.

It is likely that the above listing only covers a small portion of the resources kept by individuals and organizations. Since so many are informal personal or school records, it may never be possible to discover all of them. Nevertheless, the resources described here could serve as a worthwhile starting point for discovery of even more esoteric sources as research progresses.

At the same time, there are a few steps individuals in the forensics community can take to improve the storage and retrieval of forensics information. The most obvious would be to pursue a full-fledged catalog of all forensics records in existence. While this position paper has merely listed the options in general terms, a complete catalog could itemize each individual and institution's holding. Such a project would

\textsuperscript{7}Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results, edited and published by Dr. Seth C. Hawkins, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT.
be very labor intensive since it would involve attempting to survey every forensics program in the nation (as well as alumni and former coaches), but the success of ISTR and Sharon Porter's (Northern Arizona University) recently published forensics directory\(^8\) indicates that a project of this magnitude is feasible.

Short of completing such a massive project, it would be helpful if the forensics community would strive to produce more thorough records of its activities. Specifically, tournament directors need to submit their results to ISTR in the most accurate, complete, and timely manner possible. Inclusion of tournament results in this record should receive the same priority as submission of results for documenting students' eligibility for national tournaments.

Finally, errors made by those outside the forensics community need to be pointed out vigorously. I have already written to R.R. Bowker, the publishers of *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory*, alerting them that as a member of the forensics community and as a professional librarian, I disagree with their miscategorization of the *National Forensic Journal*. Other individuals need to lobby as forcefully as possible for accurate representation of forensics literature in the standard reference material.

The immediate situation for forensics research is not about to change dramatically. It will take several years even in the best circumstances to make forensics literature as accessible as the literature of more established fields. Fortunately, however, enough informal networks for information distribution have emerged to fill the gap until research access improves.

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\(^8\)1989-90 Collegiate Forensics Directory, edited and published for the Council of Forensics Organizations by Sharon Porter, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.