



13 December 1968

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Stanford University  
School of Medicine  
Stanford, California

Dear Professor Lederberg:

IDI has developed a simple but very effective approach to helping people in fast-moving fields cope with the flood of information, both good and worthless, which crosses their desks. We have already proved the method works in fields such as economics, fiscal management and school administration. We believe the system has outstanding potentialities in a few highly selected areas of science and technology.

The basic idea is to permit graduate students and research personnel to listen each week to an informal half-hour chat by an outstanding and articulate authority in their field of major interest. The authority, in an "over coffee" tone, discusses scientific developments that happened to catch his attention during the week. The mechanism for accomplishing this is a weekly mailing of small reel-to-reel magnetic tape cassettes to the subscribers who are also supplied with inexpensive playback units. In this way, an eminent authority in a research area can bring his expert views and discriminating perspectives to a very wide and important audience.

IDI would like to start such a weekly series on molecular biology. As I'm sure you've guessed by now, we're hoping to persuade you to serve as the commentator for the series. We are emboldened to make this suggestion to you, not because of the money involved, which happens to be considerable, but because of the opportunity for you to reach out and touch, as it were, thousands of students and researchers.

We would not be much of a bother to you. If you wished, IDI would arrange to have a trained interviewer meet with you at any place you designate, preferably but not necessarily at a regular time each week. The interviewer would bring along a portable tape recorder, or we would simply supply one for you to keep and handle yourself. You could then discuss those aspects of molecular biology that interested you in terms that you think would be relevant to your audience. Ideally, I suppose, we would like to arrange the commentaries so they focused on those things you found in the literature, at meetings or seminars, or in your own research to be of greatest significance during the week.

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The entire recording session would last no more than 45 minutes once a week. The actual cassette-time could run anywhere from 22 to 28 minutes. You could speak informally, from notes or with journals before you, etc., or in any other way you see fit. The whole spirit of the program, as noted earlier, might be described by the phrase "coffee with Professor Lederberg."

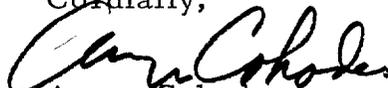
Beyond question, your participation in this breakthrough informational/ educational program would help bring a new level of excellence to activities in molecular biology. I can't think of a greater contribution you could make to helping colleagues and students than to participate in such a series, and we hope you agree. The idea would be to permit researchers to handle the cassettes like books and take them to their labs or seminars or play them anywhere (home, auto, office, etc.), anytime, as often as they like, on the playback unit we would supply as part of the service.

If we could tempt you to participate, IDI would pay you 12 per cent of the retail price from subscribers. We estimate that this would enable you to earn from \$200 to \$400 per week in additional income—and most likely much more.

I've enclosed some material that tells a bit about IDI. I'll be delighted to tell you more about us at your convenience. Because we are most anxious to get your reactions to this project, I hope you won't mind if we call you in a week or so. If for some reason we won't be able to reach you, I'd be grateful if you would call me collect or write me your reaction to this proposal as soon as it is convenient for you to do so.

All good wishes.

Cordially,

  
Aaron Cohodes  
Vice President

AC:rg  
Encl.

P.S. - I've also enclosed some material describing the service we are operating for the financial community.