

## Special Issues and Guest Editorials

# Is the Journal *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities* Necessary?

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## Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities

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This editorial describes (a) the history and founding of the new journal *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities* (ICA); (b) the editorial principles of ICA; (c) a bibliometric analysis of publications on intelligence over time; and (d) the outlook for ICA and intelligence research. A key aim of ICA is to continue the Detterman-Haier tradition of editing and publication by providing unbiased reviews of intelligence research; avoiding political debates about issues that are a matter of opinion as opposed to scientific evidence; and adjudicating scientific claims based on scientific merit, defined as strength of argument, analytical approach, validity of results, the weight of evidence, and clarity of exposition.

“[The journal] *Intelligence* continues to be necessary because there is still prejudice against the topic. In fact, it may always be necessary because we are dealing with such important ideas not fully appreciated by those outside the field.” (Detterman, 2016, p. viii)

### History and Founding of *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities*

Richard Haier and I founded the journal *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities* (ICA) in January 2025 and began accepting manuscripts on February 1, 2025. We decided to create ICA in December 2024 following a dramatic change in the editorial direction and leadership of Elsevier's journal *Intelligence*, for which Rich and I had served as Editor in Chief and Associate Editor, respectively, for nine years. Our decision to create ICA was based in part on Elsevier's lack of transparency and consultation with the editorial board of *Intelligence* about the new direction of *Intelligence* and on their lack of explanation for why they picked new editors who did not self-identify as intelligence researchers and who had no connection to the broader intelligence research community. Inquiries by editorial board members to Elsevier and the new editors were ignored or received replies which were non-responsive to the concerns raised. For these reasons, there was a mass resignation of the editorial board of *Intelligence*, and most board members who resigned then joined ICA's editorial board (Carl, 2024). For ICA's editorial board, see <https://icajournal.scholasticahq.com/editorial-board>.

The founding of ICA happened in record time thanks to the support, encouragement, and input of many researchers, especially those who provided startup capital for ICA. Happily, Timothy Bates of Edinburgh University (UK) and Anna-Lena Schubert of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Germany) agreed to be Associate Editors. ICA's editorial board has expertise across the full range of intelligence topics, designs, and analytical methods of dif-

ferent subfields (e.g., psychometrics, education, social, cultural, genetic, evolutionary, developmental, organizational, neuroimaging, and neuroscience). Douglas Detterman, the founder of *Intelligence*, and Richard Haier graciously agreed to serve as consulting editors for ICA.

### Editorial Principles of *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities*

ICA was created to ensure that intelligence researchers have an unbiased publication outlet, edited by scientists with strong track records in intelligence. ICA's history and credo are on its website (see <https://icajournal.scholasticahq.com/about>). Consistent with these aims and credo, ICA's publication standards are guided by Merton's (1942) four norms of science: universalism, disinterestedness, communalism, and organized skepticism (Woodley of Menie et al., 2025). These norms include the proposition that scientific validity is independent of the sociopolitical status or personal attributes of its participants. Consistent with the Kalven Report (1967; see also, Thorp, 2024), ICA will avoid political debates about issues that are a matter of opinion and are not grounded in scientific evidence. As noted in ICA's history and credo, the principal criterion for publication is scientific merit, based on strength of argument, analytical approach, validity of results, and clarity of exposition. These standards are consistent with Haier's (2020) editorial on academic freedom and social responsibility, which argued that scientific controversies should be adjudicated by the weight of evidence, quality of argument, and validity of results.

To maximize the availability of published papers, ICA is entirely online and Open Access – made possible by modern editorial management provided by the Scholastica platform. Since many intelligence researchers do not have funding for publication costs, ICA offers generous waivers and discounts, and its publication fee is substantially lower than other journals that cover intelligence (at least by 50%).

ICA supports the principles of open science (e.g., Crüwell et al., 2019). The editorial team believes that the advancement of knowledge is best served when data, methods, and findings are transparently accessible, ensuring that researchers, practitioners, and the broader scientific community can scrutinize and build upon every study. By encouraging pre-registration, we promote methodological rigor and guard against biases in experimental design. We also advocate for the sharing of datasets and reproducible code to enable independent replication and accelerate the collective progress of the field. In embracing these open science practices, ICA fosters a collaborative environment where credibility, reliability, and continuous innovation thrive.

### Bibliometric Analysis of Intelligence Research and Implications for ICA

When Douglas Detterman founded *Intelligence* in 1977, he published the editorial “Is *Intelligence* Necessary” (Detterman, 1977), in which he highlighted the growth of research on intelligence over time as a key indicator of the journal’s necessity. The same question can be asked of ICA in the present day. Detterman’s (1977, p. 1) editorial reported the number of publications on the topic of intelligence from 1927 to 1972, showing a four-fold increase in publications on intelligence – from about 100 in 1927 to about 400 in 1972. Extending Detterman’s (1977) analysis, I searched Web of Science (WOS; Clarivate, 2025) for publications on intelligence over the past 25 years (2000–2024) using a topic search (title, abstract, keywords) with terms “intelligence”, “cognitive”, and “abilities”. The combination of terms identified publications on cognitive intelligence while filtering out topics that are not germane to cognitive intelligence (e.g., artificial or military intelligence). The results indicated an increase in the number of publications on intelligence from 157 in 2000 to 868 in 2024, a roughly six-fold increase over 25 years (Fig. 1). Not bad! For comparison, I performed an analogous topic search with terms “personality” and “traits”, which indicated an increase in publications on personality from 668 in 2000 to 4612 in 2024, a roughly seven-fold increase over the same period. In sum, publications on intelligence and personality, two major sources of individual differences, have increased substantially over the last 25 years, attesting to the demand for outlets like ICA that publish research on intelligence and individual differences. As shown by the personality figures, intelligence research, though, still has room to grow.

I also examined key topics and categories in intelligence research. Using the search terms noted above (i.e., intelligence, cognitive, abilities), I identified the top 10 WOS Research Categories in intelligence research. These were (publication counts): Psychology Multidisciplinary (2184), Neurosciences (1514), Psychology Experimental (1053), Psychiatry (1001), Psychology (958), Clinical Neurology (941), Psychology Educational (850), Psychology Developmental (825), Educational Research (653), and Behavioral Sciences (589). An analogous WOS search of the top 10 Research Areas in intelligence research yielded the following results (publication counts): Psychology (6273), Neuro-

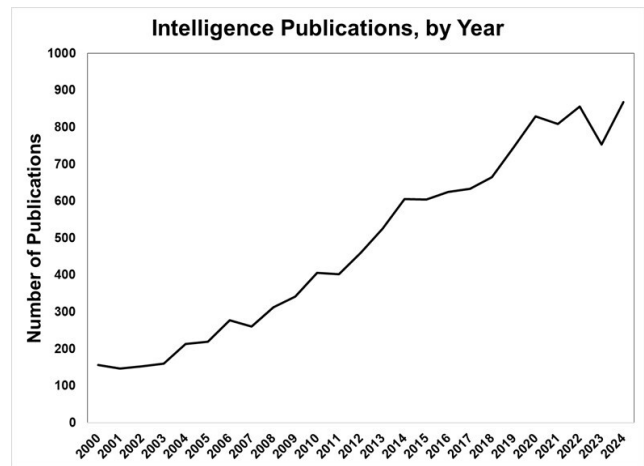


Fig. 1. Number of publications on intelligence from 2000 to 2024 in Web of Science database.

sciences Neurology (2225), Psychiatry (1001), Educational Research (943), Computer Science (873), Behavioral Sciences (589), Science Technology (520), Business Economics (474), Pediatrics (473), and Engineering (409).

The results of key topics and categories in intelligence research have implications for ICA and intelligence research. First, intelligence is a core topic in psychology and in other disciplines, including neuroscience and genetics, which examine brain functions and genetic variants related to cognitive abilities; applied sciences such as economics and education, which examine effects of schooling on intelligence and country differences in intelligence; and medicine and health sciences (e.g., psychiatry), which examine intellectual disabilities. Second, based on its multidisciplinary orientation, intelligence research can be considered a “hub science,” incorporating the social sciences (e.g., economics, education, psychology), biological sciences (e.g., biology, neuroscience, genetics), and inorganic and physical sciences (e.g., engineering and computer science) (cf. Cacioppo, 2007). Finally, as indicated by the WOS Research Categories search, intelligence research involves both correlational and experimental methods, including laboratory and psychometric methods to examine cognitive processes (e.g., working memory, processing speed) and the neural and genetic bases of intelligence (e.g., brain metabolism and genetic variants) (e.g., Frischkorn et al., 2022; Hilger et al., 2022). The methods encompass both of Cronbach’s (1957) two disciplines of psychology, namely experimental psychology and correlational psychology, which examine the cognitive, social, neural, and genetic bases of cognitive abilities. ICA welcomes submissions from all these perspectives.

### The Future of *Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities* and Intelligence Research

I am optimistic about the future of ICA because it fills a critical niche in journals on intelligence that is not guaranteed by for-profit publishers. To my knowledge, there are no prominent outlets for intelligence research that explicitly state that their aim is to provide unbiased reviews of in-

telligence research, encourage free inquiry of all aspects of intelligence research, and have scientific merit as the principal criterion for publication. To be sure, many journals tacitly claim to support such aims, but ICA puts them in writing as an explicit statement of editorial direction and principle. Such statements are important because, without them, the aims and standards of a journal may drift over time to accommodate the prevailing zeitgeist, an outcome suggested by Robert Conquest's Second Law of Organizations (Amis, 1991, p. 146; see also, Vogel, 2018).

I am also optimistic about the future of ICA because of the practical importance of intelligence in solving societal problems and its ubiquitousness as a source of variance common to mental tests, often called *g* (general intelligence), a foundational construct in our field. Regarding the practical and societal importance of intelligence, Detterman (2016) said:

From very early, I was convinced that intelligence was the most important thing of all to understand, more important than the origin of the universe, more important than climate change, more important than curing cancer, more important than anything else. That is because human intelligence is our major adaptive function and only by optimizing it will we be able to save ourselves and other living things from ultimate destruction. It is as simple as that. (p. v)

While everyone may not share Detterman's (2016, p. v) perspective, *g* permeates all cognitive tests (e.g., verbal, math, spatial, memory, speed) and therefore is applicable to all scientists who study individual differences in cognition. *g* indicates that people who do well on one test generally do well on all other tests. Evidence for *g* has been found

on diverse tests and with diverse samples, including people from different countries and cultures (Warne & Burningham, 2019; see also, Johnson et al., 2004, 2008). Given the ubiquity of *g*, scientists who study individual differences in cognition are effectively studying *g*. As a result, such scientists should be mindful of the influence of *g* by, for example, considering *g* as a control or primary variable in their research.

### Coda

ICA was launched to continue the traditions established by Douglas Detterman, who founded the journal *Intelligence* in 1977. Detterman's traditions were continued by Richard Haier, who edited *Intelligence* from 2016 to 2024 when he retired. The Detterman-Haier era provided intelligence researchers with a trusted and reliable outlet for their research based on fair and constructive peer review by domain experts. The ICA editorial team and board are eagerly looking forward to working with researchers and scholars who will be submitting their work and trusting us to continue these traditions into a future where the best research advances can benefit from a modern publishing platform based on scientific merit.

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