

## **Chapter 12. The Archive of Market and Social Research - looking backwards to look forwards**

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### **Summary**

This chapter relates to the work of the Archive of Market and Social Research (AMSR), which liberates a rich set of data and commentary generated since the 1950s by the market and social research industry, to support commercial and social progress. The AMSR was initially focused on the marketing services sector. A series of qualitative and quantitative research projects carried out to identify the market for the Archive showed that the information could usefully be made available to universities, to enhance research and learning in business and social science disciplines and to prepare graduates for their careers. The chapter reviews in full the contents of the Archive and suggests how it (and similar archives and material) could be used in developing academic understanding of marketing research.

### **What the AMSR is**

The AMSR is a living, searchable archive of high-quality research, trend data and commentary, regularly updated and accumulated over many decades. The AMSR was set up by several senior members of the marketing research industry, concerned that the knowledge gained over the preceding 70 years was in danger of being lost to future researchers. Drawn from the output of practitioners over many decades, it forms an inspiring source of insight for those seeking to explore the dynamics of change – in the past, the present and crucially, the future. The AMSR is established as a charity under UK law, overseen by a Board of Trustees, with day to day management being the responsibility of the Executive Committee (AMSR, 2020).

The Archive consists of reports and data from market, social, political and economic researchers in research agencies such as MORI, TGI, NOP Millward Brown and the Market Research Society, and in companies who use the data. This digital resource provides direct access to the complete Archive. For the first time a comprehensive collection of historic research materials was drawn together and held in one place, showing how the marketing research and customer insight industry developed and the role played by significant individuals, organisations and companies. The development of techniques is catalogued and made available for reference and study (AMSR, 2020).

The core proposition was clearly stated as “Market and social insight set free”. Its purpose was:

- Building and providing free access to the Archive for as wide a range of audiences as possible.
- Developing thought leadership pieces, writing papers, presented at conferences and published in Journals - drawing from the past to inform the present and the future.
- Fostering links with key academic institutions and academics: providing access to academics, students and sponsoring student research projects.
- Fostering links with key industry associations and other marketing research Archives

The Archive is designed to be used by:

- Educators and students in academic institution;
- Research practitioners;
- Business and marketing consultants;
- Industry associations.

### **The sources and form of AMSR information**

Since World War II, the UK has been one of the leading countries in the development and use of qualitative and quantitative survey research, to measure people's behaviour and attitudes. Such research has now become a major part of everyday life, affecting all activities including food, drink, lifestyle, media, finance, travel, and social attitudes. The AMSR provides access to major studies detailing UK business and social history. Its research continues to collect as much material as possible relating to its areas of interest, professionally housing and curating it for the benefit of the research community and wider audiences.

The Archive is divided into a number of groups, called 'collections'. When accessing the Archive website, users see these listed, with a brief description of what they contain. For example, if a researcher is looking for a book, a simple click links the user to the detailed pages for that collection. Collections are defined by the type of document they contain (books, papers, reports etc.) rather than by subject (since most items in the Archive span a range of subjects). Where there is a clearly recognisable group or series, such as the UK Market Research Society Newsletter or the MORI British Public Opinion series, that can be a separate collection.

The Archive of Market and Social Research contains several significant studies, technical developments, survey results and biographical details and key documents, including published papers, journals, books and newsletters covering the fields of UK market and social research over the last 70 years.

Users can also find:

- Longitudinal surveys covering commercial, social and attitudinal topics;
- Case studies showing how marketing research and customer insight has been used to effect commercial and social change;
- Published thinking on qualitative and quantitative research techniques and their uses available from a single source;
- A long run of general election polling statistics;
- Historical documents charting the story of the market and social research industries.

### **Forms of content**

The user can see the following content:

#### ***Books***

The AMSR contains books on market or social research and research-related topics. They include textbooks on research methods and statistical techniques, as well as books written for less specialist audiences, on subjects such as how marketing and advertising work, on the result of research into various topics and on the history of marketing research. They include "The making of an industry" (Blythe, 2005), a 230-page history of UK marketing research published in 2005 by the Market Research Society, and the "Dictionary of Market Research" (Talmage, 1988), published by the Market Research Society and the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA).

#### ***BBC World Service Audience Research***

This includes a collection of audience research reports and papers relating to the operations of the BBC World Service between 1990 and 2001. These studies were undertaken in all parts of the world

covered by the World Service, many of them during periods of crisis in the countries concerned. BBC World Service Audience Research was donated to the Archive by Graham Mytton, who was head of the BBC International Audience Research Department during those years.

### ***Census***

This includes documents about censuses, mainly the UK Census. It includes discussion papers and analyses, selected papers in journals, and a small number of conference papers and press cuttings.

### ***Conference Papers***

This includes volumes of papers from research conferences from the 1960s onwards. Most are conferences and seminars organised by the UK's Market Research Society (MRS) and the Industrial Market Research Association (IMRA), later the Business & Industrial Group (BIG). There are also some papers from specialist groups such as qualitative researchers, academic bodies and international organisations, though most international conference papers are not currently available to this Archive.

### ***Company reports and PR***

This includes promotional reports and brochures from commercial research companies, company annual reports, membership directories and other information from UK-based research organisations such as the Market Research Society (MRS) and the Association of Market Survey Organisations (AMSO).

### ***The CRAM Peter Cooper Collection***

Peter Cooper (1936-2010) was co-founder of Cooper Research & Marketing, later CRAM International, with his wife Jackie French. Cooper studied clinical psychology at the University of Manchester, where he became a Lecturer in the early 1960s. He became involved in commercial motivational research and in 1968 opened Cooper Research & Marketing in Manchester. Cooper was one of the most important pioneers of what we now know as qualitative research. The collection includes commercial research reports and early academic papers.

### ***Geodemographics***

Geodemographics is the science of linking variables from the census to local areas and using cluster analysis methods to group areas with similar profiles. Developed in the UK by Richard Webber in the 1970s, the system was commercially launched by CACI in the UK (under the name Acorn), parallel to Claritas' Prizm in the US. Since then several other organisations have entered the market.

### ***Guides and rulebooks***

This includes practical manuals, guides, handbooks, how-to documents, training course hand-outs, quality standards and codes of practice on research methodology. Many of these were produced by the Market Research Society and other UK-based and international research organisations, by research buying organisations such as the UK-based Association of Users of Research Agencies (AURA), and by research agencies and others conducting marketing research. Topics covered include commissioning research, writing research proposals, research design, sampling, questionnaire design, interview standards, analysis, presentations, report writing, plus standardised systems for measuring audiences and classifying population groups (e.g. social grading).

### ***Journals and other documents***

This includes miscellaneous issues of journals, mainly from publishers outside the UK, for which the Archive does not keep a series. For some issues, only the title and contents pages have been digitised and the actual volumes can be viewed at the History of Advertising Trust. There is also a collection of miscellaneous qualitative research.

### ***Market Research Abstracts (1963-1997)***

A complete collection of volumes of Market Research Abstracts which were produced and published by the Market Research Society twice a year from 1963 to 1997. They contain abstracts of papers relevant to marketing research, from a range of journals and conference papers, both UK and international, on topics including research, statistics, psychology and sociology, economics, marketing, advertising and business management. Each volume includes a list of the titles covered, an extensive subject index of the abstracts included and an author index. Publication ceased in 1997, as by then it had been overtaken by online searching.

### ***Market Research Development Fund***

These are reports, reviews and papers produced by the Market Research Development Fund between 1982 and 1987. These are mainly in-depth reports on topics of importance to the marketing research industry at the time, including response rates, interview methods, qualitative research, employee research and data fusion.

### ***MRS Newsletter (1966-1992)***

The Market Research Society (MRS) Newsletter was published monthly from 1966 to 1992. It contained news on companies, people, meetings and events, training courses, seminars, conferences, plus correspondence and advertisements for jobs in marketing research in the UK and elsewhere. Later it expanded to include feature articles on topics of current interest. In 1992 it was replaced by Research Magazine (see below).

### ***AURA Newsletter***

These are issues of short newsletters produced between 1993 and 1997 by the UK Association of Users of Research Agencies for its members, typically research buyers (clients) of research providers and research agencies. Each newsletter lists meetings and events, personnel changes and other items of interest to the membership.

### ***Millward Brown***

Short papers, most from 2006 onwards, from the research agency Millward Brown (later Kantar Millward Brown), an advertising and brand research specialist. The papers are all about successful advertising and branding strategies. They are based on information drawn from Millward Brown's Knowledge Bank, a large database of its research on brands and advertising, plus case studies, conference papers, magazine articles and learnings documents.

### ***Miscellaneous newsletters***

These are newsletters from various mainly UK-based research organisations, including:

- The Industrial Market Research Association (IMRA);
- The Business and Industrial Research Group (BIG);
- The Association of Qualitative Research Practitioners (AQRP), the British Market Research Association (BMRA) (an association of research suppliers formed in 1998 from a merger of the Association of Market Survey Organisations (AMSO), and the Association of British Market Research Companies (ABMRC);
- The Independent Consultants Group of the Market Research Society;
- The Market Research Development Fund (MRDF).

At the time of writing, the Archive did not have a complete series of any of these newsletters, but more will be added if and when they become available.

### ***MORI British Public Opinion***

British Public Opinion was published by MORI (Market and Opinion Research International), the company founded by Sir Robert Worcester, from 1979 to 2003. These highly detailed journals

contain a mass of information from polls and surveys giving a fascinating insight into the political topics of the time. These were made available by the top polling expert, Sir Robert Worcester. This collection can be searched by topic, context, location, research method and publication date.

### ***MORI Reports***

This is a selection of over 50 reports on research conducted by the opinion polling and research company Market and Opinion Research International (MORI). These have been made available by the Ipsos MORI archive, cover a wide range of topics and are dated from 1982 to 2009. Only a summary of the contents is available in the digital archive. Copies of these reports are not held by the Archive and the full reports may be viewed only with the permission and at the discretion of Ipsos MORI. As the reports are held in a storage facility, there is a charge to cover retrieval costs.

### ***NOP Reports***

This is a continuous series of monthly reports on their public opinion polling from National Opinion Polls (NOP) Ltd. The series began in 1963 under the title Political Bulletin but in 1975 became Political, Economic & Social Review. Each volume contains the results of polling on voting intentions and satisfaction with politicians and policies. Most volumes also contain a collection of press cuttings showing how the polls were reported, and special features on research on other topics which were prominent at the time. They offer a very interesting insight into public opinion at the time on many issues.

### ***Opinion Polling Reports***

This is a collection of reports of or about opinion polling from various sources. The material about opinion polls, including results, can also be found in some of the other collections, including the “British Public Opinion” journal and the Political Bulletins from National Opinion Poll. This collection is one that can be searched by topic, context, location, research method and publication date. The collection includes:

- A 1939 report on opinion polling techniques from The British Institute of Public Opinion;
- Reports on public opinion surveys on various topics conducted by Louis Harris Research Limited between 1969 and 1972;
- The Market Research Society (MRS)’s review of opinion polling and the 1992 General Election.

### ***Papers and offprints***

This includes papers and offprints from a very wide range of journals, magazines, conferences and other sources, both UK and international, dating from 1948 onwards. These papers were donated to AMSR by research practitioners who collected them during their careers. The topics covered are very wide-ranging, but many are about development in research methodology and statistical techniques. This collection is one that can be searched by topic, context, location, research method and publication date.

### ***Papers – Ehrenberg collection***

This is a special collection of papers from, or relating to, the work of Andrew Ehrenberg, Gerald Goodhardt and their colleagues over many years at London Business School, Southbank University, Aske Research etc., to develop a scientific understanding of consumer behaviour. They come largely from the files left by the late Andrew Ehrenberg, supplemented by donations from other sources, and deal with a wide range of subjects, especially analytical and modelling techniques and statistics. This collection can also be searched by topic, context, location, research method and publication date.

### ***Press cuttings and articles***

This includes cuttings from a wide range of publications (UK and international) about marketing research practice or practitioners, plus other ephemera. These items were donated to AMSR by research practitioners who accumulated them during the course of their careers. They are mainly cuttings from the marketing press or national newspapers.

### ***Proposals and tenders***

This is a miscellaneous collection of bid documents proposing or tendering for research projects. These date from the 1970s onwards. In most cases the bid is for research to a single research buyer, but in some cases, it is for syndicated research, i.e. research where the costs would be shared between multiple buyers.

### ***Qualitative Journals***

These are journals specialising in qualitative research (i.e. in-depth research using techniques such as group discussions, focus groups and depth interviews). The main titles included are:

- Qualitative Market Research: an International Journal (1998–2014);
- Qualitative Methods in Psychology (QMIP) newsletter (British Psychological Society) (2006–2011);
- For each journal, only the title and contents pages have been digitised and the actual volumes can be viewed at the History of Advertising Trust.

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### ***Reports of projects***

These are reports on research projects. These documents were donated to the AMSR by research practitioners who worked on them or acquired them during their careers. These reports, the oldest of which dates from 1925, cover a very wide range of topics, from food purchasing to social housing, from magazine readership to car advertising, plus reports on the marketing research industry itself. In a few of the reports, only the title and contents pages have been digitised, and the actual reports can be viewed at the History of Advertising Trust (<https://www.hatads.org.uk/>).

### ***Research Magazine***

Research Magazine was published monthly by the Market Research Society (MRS) from 1992 to 2012 as the successor to the MRS Newsletter (see separate collection). This Archive holds issues from 1992 to 2002; issues from 2003 to 2012 are available from the MRS. Like the Newsletter it contained news on companies, people, meetings and events, training courses, seminars, conferences, correspondence, feature articles on research topics and advertisements for omnibus surveys and for jobs in marketing research in the UK and elsewhere. Issues frequently had an accompanying, separate, supplement on subjects of interest such as research on specific markets, in different continents or different types of research. In 2001 an accompanying, separate, Newsletter hiving off the news element was created. Research Magazine was replaced in 2013 by Impact Magazine, published quarterly with a focus on research effectiveness and available online via the Market Research Society.

### ***Statistics Journals***

This covers the title and contents pages of 25 volumes of statistics journals, mostly from the UK-based Royal Statistical Society and Institute of Statisticians. The complete volumes can be viewed at the History of Advertising Trust or other sources.

### ***Survey Magazine (1983-1991)***

Survey Magazine was published quarterly by the Market Research Society from 1983 to 1991. It was intended to provide more detailed articles and analyses on research topics than were found in the monthly MRS members' newsletter. Publication ceased when the Newsletter and Survey Magazine were replaced by Research Magazine in 1992.

### ***Survey Methods (SCPR)***

Survey Methods Newsletters were produced three times a year by Social & Community Planning Research (SCPR), later the Joint Centre for Survey Methods. In October 1980 the research company Social & Community Planning Research (SCPR), in association with City University, set up the

Survey Methods Centre [one of five national Designated Research Centres funded by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC)] and began publishing the newsletters. Their aim was to promote good practice in survey methodology, disseminate relevant research findings and encourage discussion and debate. They include reports on methodological seminars held by the organisation plus short papers on other topics of current interest, news, conference reports, book reviews etc. The Archive contains volumes 1–18, published from 1980 to 1998. SCPR is now the National Centre for Social Research (NATCEN) and since 2004 (volume 22) the Newsletter has been published on its website.

### ***TGI***

The Target Group Index (TGI) is a continuous survey carried out in Great Britain since 1969, and in Northern Ireland since 1992. It comprises completed self-completion questionnaires from 25,000 adults aged 15-plus in Great Britain per annum. Each respondent provides information on his or her use or purchase of all major products, brands and services. Exposure to different media is measured, as well as attitudinal and demographic data. The reports in the Archive so far include:

- Trackback studies on specific product areas using 25 years' data up to 1993;

### ***The MRS Journal***

The Journal is the main publication of the Market Research Society, recognised as a peer-reviewed academic journal, although its editors and contributors were traditionally practitioners in the research industry rather than academics. Founded in 1956 under the title 'Commentary', it became the Journal of the Market Research Society (JMRS) in 1968 and the International Journal of Market Research in winter 1999-2000. It was issued quarterly up to 2004, changed to bi-monthly in 2005. Issues up to and including 1990 can be read here online. Issues from 1991 and later can be accessed online at the World Advertising Research Centre (<https://www.warc.com>). Physical copies of both periods are held at the History of Advertising Trust.

### ***AMSRS Demonstration***

Research News is the journal of the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS).

### **Use of AMSR**

Other examples of 'Stories' on the Archive website at the time of writing include those listed below.

### ***The UK National Health Service: changing attitudes and expectations - AMSR***

Given the events of the coronavirus pandemic, belief in the care and capabilities of the UK's National Health Service (NHS) is an increasingly important issue. This is confirmed by an Ipsos MORI poll completed nationwide on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 in which people were asked how confident they were in the ability of the NHS to deal with those who are ill as a result of getting coronavirus. 71% said they were very or fairly confident, while only 25% were not so confident.

However, earlier poll data in the Archive showed that this confidence in the competence and durability of the NHS has not always been present. In 1988 MORI also found that although 64% rated the NHS a 'Good' or 'Fairly Good', only 35% expected it would deserve a similar rating in five years' time. This declining optimism was further evident in the fact that while 47% thought in 2000 that the NHS would get better, only 28% thought similarly in 2005. In 2001 MORI found as many as 60% thought it likely that within their lifetime healthcare would no longer be free on the NHS. Also, in 1988 more than 70% rated nurses, GPs and hospital doctors as 'Good', but only 39% were willing to say the same of NHS administrators. More recently, in 2017 negative expectations of the NHS were still prevalent. According to a British Medical Association survey, 43% were dissatisfied with the NHS and only 33% satisfied, 82% were worried about its future, and 62% expected it to get worse. Clearly all these negative attitudes and expectations have been overtaken by the Covid 19 crisis, in which the NHS has reasserted its central role in our lives.

### ***British reservations about Europe have been apparent for at least 50 years***

Historical evidence shows that the British people have always had strong reservations about their links with Europe. As shown by results accessible via the AMSR website, in September 1969 the Harris Poll found that 54% of voters were against Britain joining the Common Market while only 30% were in favour. By February 1970 a further poll found that this difference had increased, with a 63% to 19% negative result. Then in a poll on the eve of the House of Commons vote in October 1971, the difference narrowed, but still 49% were found to be against joining the EU while only 30% were in favour. Despite that, 84% assumed that Britain would join. Among many other questions covered in these polls, in the last of them, voters were asked whether they thought the Government had given enough time and opportunity for full nationwide discussion on the issues: as many as 59% thought they had not. So, for 50 years the divide over Europe has clearly been a running sore, not only in the Tory party but also across the nation as a whole.

### ***A simple measure of the growth in environmental awareness***

The continuous consumer study Target Group Index (TGI) has asked for respondents' opinions on a range of topics since the mid-1980s. Some of its attitude statements have remained constant; others have been added or removed to reflect changing times. The area of greatest change has been in measuring attitudes to the environment. Examining the statements included in the 1987 and 2012 TGI datasets is very revealing. In 1987, only one of about 200 TGI statements was environmentally themed: "I disapprove of aerosols because of their effect on the atmosphere." In those days, CFCs and their impact on the ozone layer were a regular news topic. CFCs were to be banned internationally by 1996, but in 1987 the balance of the UK population were not persuaded. More people disagreed with the statement (34%) than agreed (26%).

### ***The changing face of our eating habits - AMSR***

Several market research studies have tracked the changes in our eating habits which we now take for granted. For example, an article in *Survey* Spring 1989 reports on the studies conducted by the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which for half a century collected data monitoring the nations' eating patterns. The National Food Survey was conceived in the 1930s, drawing on the food baskets of the past-depression years and World War II and it continued to provide a monitor of the changing larders and fridges of British households.

The Family Food Panel was established by Taylor Nelson in 1974, with the objective of filling a gap in the availability of continuous research tracking the nation's eating habits. The Food Panel identified changing trends in eating habits and behaviour such as convenience/time saving and healthy diets. An article in *Survey*, January 1985 discussed how changing patterns of work, leisure and personal relationships and attitudes towards health and well-being affected eating habits. It also focused on the changing habits of eating out and 'grazing' and snacking throughout the day. In Spring 1989 an article discussed the demise of 'tea-time' with cakes and sandwiches and a 30% decline in cooked breakfasts. It reported a huge increase in awareness and consumption of foods like curries, pasta and pizza. In 1989 microwave ownership, now a staple in most kitchens, was approaching 50%. The trend towards divergent individual tastes within families had begun, and no longer were members of the family necessarily sitting down together and eating the same meal. They were exercising autonomy over what they eat.

In 1986, to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of The Market Research Society, Gallup, on behalf of the Society, interviewed a nationally representative cross-section of people throughout Great Britain. The question put to them was 'If expense was no object and you could have anything you wanted, what would you choose for a perfect meal?' The ideal menus for 1986 were compared with those of 1947, in the days of post-war austerity. In 1986 respondents chose vegetable soup, prawn/shrimp cocktail, steak and chips and gateau; in 1947 it was tomato soup, sole, roast chicken and roast potatoes, and trifle. Chips had taken over from roast as the most popular choice of potatoes.



The change in drinking habits was most remarkable: in 1986, 61% would like wine with their meal; in 1947 only 4% chose wine. Coffee had supplanted tea as the British favourite after-dinner drink.

### **Why the AMSR is important for marketing academics and students**

Students constantly voice their desire for business and marketing lecturers to provide examples and case studies which are practical and realistic, and more up to date or detailed than available from textbooks or academic articles. The AMSR provides data for students who want to support their projects, assessments and dissertations, or even to use research data such as that available in the AMSR database. Much academic journal writing consists of articles written by marketing academics usually using relatively small-scale surveys, rather than data of the breadth and depth included in the Archive. The Scimago (2019) ranking gives nearly 178 marketing journals. The globalisation of enterprise and the rise of the digital economy have posed challenges to academics to make it more relevant to industrial needs, but according to McDonald (2003, 2009), Hughes et al. (2018), Stone (2013), Tzempelikos et al. (2020) and others, the result has not been research that is more relevant to industry.

The causes of the problem where marketing research is concerned were summarised by Tzempelikos et al. (2020) as including divorce from commercial practice, focus on techniques which are academically attractive but of limited value to business, focus on explaining reality through preconceived theory, delay in understanding the new problems of business. As Tzempelikos et al. (2020) point out, this contrasts with the high volume of grey literature (surveys, thought leadership, consulting comment, analyst reports) (including surveys) that has emerged from management consultancies and think tanks, which have added new and relevant sources to academics. However, their lack of academic “credibility” and failure to index them means that they are either not accessible to students or not valued as sources by their lecturers.

The risk of not making historical market research known to students and academic researchers is that their view of marketing research will always be what they produce at university – small studies, often with invalid data sets such as other students or academics, using analysis techniques which are commercially inappropriate. Therefore, we consider it important that more is done to make material such as that held by the AMSR available to and used by academics – students, lecturers and researchers.

### **Making the AMSR known to and available to students.**

Tzempelikos et al. (2020) identified a number of actions that need to be done to make the AMSR more known to and available to students. These include:

- Indexing (especially on Google Scholar, students’ preferred search engine);
- Creating awareness among university librarians and academics;
- Allowing the archive to form part of the contracts now the norm between universities and publishers, possibly involving information aggregators;
- Creating and using feedback on the use of AMSR content to guide further development of the AMSR;
- Providing short versions of content, including regularly posted newsletters to keep subscribers up to date, and related blogs to highlight new and existing documents.

### **Conclusion**

Research is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of marketing; and so it is not only a service the marketing function but also a means of directing the company to a successful future. Research helps management to ‘win by indicating the action it needs to take (Birn, 2004). Therefore, there is still an opportunity for marketing education to prepare students for the practical world, and indeed academics also need to understand the transformation of the marketing research sector to the customer insight industry. The transformation of the Customer Insight function is in a sense returning

to its roots. Forty years ago, marketing researchers were considered to be ‘revolutionary voices within major global brands – experimental thinkers happy to try new things searching for new answers about consumers. For example, both qualitative research and marketing analytic techniques, emerged from groups of creative planners and researchers in the 1970s and 1980s.

As the marketing researchers and customer insight specialists develop knowledge of the market sector and their brand in the sector they tend to work across all brands, so the insight role tends to be the only one (other than the Marketing Director), that has a perspective of the entire portfolio.

The Archive of Market Research has now helped this process by providing the history and the story of the brands in all markets. AMSR provides much of this thought leadership and the history and origins for theories and concepts which need to be developed a thought leadership focuses on changes in marketing research education and its practical application.

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