Dedication to William A. Gale

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This issue is dedicated to William A. Gale

Gale, as he liked to be called by his friends and family, had extremely broad interests, both professionally and otherwise. His professional career at Bell Labs included radio astronomy, economics, statistics and computational linguistics. He always had lots of collaborators because he was such a joy to work with:

I only ever really knew Bill via e-mail, yet he represented one of the most significant academic contacts I’ve ever had. The Good-Turing paper that we collaborated on was definitely one of the most fulfilling high points of my publishing career – apart from any intellectual value it may have, it was more fun than almost anything else I’ve worked on in my professional role. It was a privilege for me that Bill accepted me as a partner on that task. (Geoffrey Sampson, personal communication).

Gale had a remarkable tendency to jump start research areas in computational linguistics (and elsewhere) that would later become extremely popular. Some examples include:

- Parameter estimation
- Word sense disambiguation
- Parallel corpus alignment and text classification
- Lexical statistics

Always curious, and always a spectacular teacher, he would start his collaborator going on some new topic that would keep them busy for years to come, while he wandered off to create yet another new research area. This special issue (and the special interest group SIGLEX) is largely an outgrowth of the year or two that he spent having a good time playing with word senses in the early 1990s. There was a lot to learn from him, both as a scientist and as a person.

Selected publications of William A. Gale

Parameter estimation


**Word sense disambiguation**


**Parallel corpus alignment and text classification**


**Lexical statistics**

Church, Kenneth W., Gale, William A., Hanks, Patrick and Hindle, Donald (1989) Parsing, word associations and typical predicate-argument relations. *International Workshop on Parsing Technologies*, CMU.


