

EDITORIAL

Amid the Proliferation of Scholarly Journals

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There has been a growing interest in what may be called the democratization of information: making access to scholarly articles easier, broader, and, in some cases, free. In institutions with sufficient financial resources, libraries have subscribed to academic journals on behalf of their members, enabling faculty, students, and researchers to download the articles they need at the moment they need them. Yet this convenience, which we now so easily take for granted, is in fact a relatively recent innovation.

It was not so long ago that we visited the library in person, searched through printed volumes of journals by hand, photocopied the articles we needed, and read them on paper. When a library did not hold a particular issue, we requested it through interlibrary loan. Waiting more than a week was nothing unusual, and the call from the librarian announcing the arrival of the requested material felt almost like the delivery of a Christmas gift. Today, unless one belongs to an older generation like myself, even printing out PDF articles has become increasingly uncommon. If saving paper may contribute to environmental preservation, we can only hope that the environmental burden caused by the ever-growing number of tablet PCs accumulating in our offices will prove to be smaller.

The movement known as Open Access has undoubtedly contributed to science, particularly for researchers and institutions in financially constrained environments. Yet Open Access has now become a preferred business model not only for predatory publishers, but also for traditional legacy publishers. Even in subscription-based journals, researchers may purchase Open Access options. But among those who pay for such options, how many do so primarily for the sake of colleagues in low-resource settings? In reality, many researchers are likely driven by a very human and understandable desire: to increase the visibility of their own work. Built upon this desire - in other words, upon this demand - a flood of publishers and journals has entered the academic marketplace.

And yet, one must still ask whether our scholarly community, and particularly the field of dentistry, truly has sufficient opportunities for the presentation of ideas, perspectives, and research outcomes. Business models may have changed, but the forms and culture of academic publishing have not evolved to the same degree. To take but one example, we continue to rely heavily on the conventional formats of the Original Article and the Review Article. These forms remain valuable, and their contributions to scholarship are unquestionable. However, in an era when scientific papers are being published in overwhelming volume, it has become increasingly difficult to gain a broader view of the intellectual landscape. We need not only to examine individual trees, but also to see the forest as a whole.

Current Views in Dentistry was founded with this purpose in mind.

Although its scope is confined to the discipline of dentistry, this journal seeks to move beyond rigid formal constraints and to welcome manuscripts of diverse types. A contribution may take the form of an unproven but thought-provoking hypothesis. It may be a personal reflection shaped by experience. It may be a historical overview, a conceptual essay, a critical interpretation of emerging trends, or a proposal for the future direction of dental science, education, policy, or practice. Yet even as we embrace this breadth of form, we shall not abandon the fundamental discipline of evidence-based thinking.

Whether this endeavor will ultimately contribute to the advancement of science and dentistry will be revealed only with time - through the life of this journal, and through the wisdom that this new experience may teach us.

May this inaugural issue be blessed with purpose, integrity, and enduring value.

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