

Streamlining in 2008

**Howard Einspahr^a and
Manfred S. Weiss^b**

^aPO Box 6395, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-0395, USA, and ^bEMBL Hamburg Outstation, c/o DESY, Notkestrasse 85, D-22603 Hamburg, Germany

This year has marked the introduction of changes throughout *Acta Crystallographica Section F*, including a new appointment at the top of editorial board. It has also represented a watershed in the evolution of the journal with the provision of several new tools for authors. In an earlier editorial we noted the introduction of an enhanced figure tool, but there also appeared, without fanfare, the option to upload an mmCIF (created upon deposition with the PDB) and use this to populate experimental tables for publication. With that achievement, the first phase of the *Section F* streamlining initiative was completed.

The idea of streamlining had been discussed for a number of years, but began in earnest with the inception of *Section F* in 2004. It was the brainchild of a number of people including John Helliwell, then Editor-in-Chief of IUCr Journals, Peter Strickland, Managing Editor, and Helen Berman of the Research Collaboratory for Structural Bioinformatics (RCSB). The goal was to minimize duplication of effort in the scientific deposition and publication tasks central to structural biology, enabling facile transfer of information from database to journal, thereby speeding publication but also encouraging enrichment of depositions. The task required listing of all data required and recommended for publication, groundwork for which had already been undertaken by the journal editors, as well as assuring that all such data items had definitions in the mmCIF dictionary, preparation for which had already begun at RCSB. One of us worked closely with Brian McMahon of IUCr Journals and John Westbrook of RCSB to put that piece of the jigsaw in place, and we note with pleasure their contributions in particular and the contributions of all the others, named and unnamed, to the success of this effort.

It is safe to say that as the initiative has matured its goals have become ever more ambitious. Over the last couple of years, another phase of the project began to absorb more and more of the available resources, and the developments have flourished far beyond initial expectations. The fruits of that new phase will appear on the IUCr Journals web pages in 2009, including an inviting template-based portal to guide and assist authors in entering data and assembling a draft of a crystallization or structure communication. It will also produce, as a by-product, an mmCIF of the data that will be freely available for access by databases. A beta version is already in the hands of the journal editors for trial and comment. New ideas are being added before general release next year but development and growth will continue. Special thanks go to Gernot Kostorz, Editor-in-chief, who has steadfastly supported these efforts. Thanks also, again, to Peter Strickland and Brian McMahon, and to Louise Jones, Technical Editor, and Simon Westrip, application developer, for the vision and the talent to make this happen. Happy New Year!