

Editorial

Changes in *Biophysical Journal*

This is a very competitive time in biophysics publishing, with new journals being spawned frequently to deal with our increasing exciting science. *BJ* is working hard to stay ahead of the competition, scientifically, administratively, and technologically. Some items of particular interest:

- We are attracting more of the top-rank articles in central areas of biophysics, becoming the journal of choice in those areas. Grouping the articles by topic in each issue makes the journal more easily navigable and more interesting to a wider readership.
- The *Biophysical Journal* Editorial Office has finalized its move to Bethesda, so that all journal matters are now coordinated in one central, permanent location.
- The time between acceptance and publication has been shortened, to as low as 7 weeks. Submission of final versions of manuscripts on disk speeds up copyediting and makes it more accurate.
- We have a new, simplified policy for color figures. Authors will be charged \$300 for each color figure number, regardless of how many parts it contains, so long as it fits on one page of *BJ*. This will do away with complexities of calculating figure size, charging separately for separations and printing, etc.
- Our printer, Cadmus Journal Services, has started integrating text and graphics on proofs, giving a clearer idea of how the article will look in print and making it easier to identify slips such as switching of figures.
- SGML markup of all manuscripts begins with the July 1995 issue. This will make it possible to use articles in many ways: print, CD-ROM, Internet—and who can guess what else?
- Experiments are being conducted by the Editorial Office, using e-mail to send author submittal information and revised manuscripts to editors and referees, both speeding the process and cutting costs.
- Refereeing is harder to speed up, since referees (all of us) are busier with grants, their own manuscripts, and an increasingly hectic scientific life. We use e-mail and fax to expedite peer review as much as possible, but human effort is still the limiting factor.
- The Editorial Office will soon be establishing an expertise database, which will broaden the range of reviewers and, we hope, speed up refereeing.

Biophysics on the Internet

Meetings and journals are the traditional channels of communication fostered by scientific societies. We view the Internet as the third channel of communication. We are using the Internet in a variety of ways.

Biophysical Journal has started an Advanced Abstract project that will appear on the Gopher and World Wide Web servers. Advanced Abstracts will consist of abstracts from accepted manuscripts, available with author permission, appearing on the Internet within a few days after acceptance. This will increase exposure and give 2 months advance notice of new results. The Advanced Abstracts will also be searchable using WAIS technology.

We are giving careful thought to whether the full text of *BJ* should appear on the Internet. There are concerns about cost of lost subscriptions, and also about quality of the images, but few doubt that this will be a reality by the year 2000. The explorations of Steve White with Protein Science, with which we were involved initially through the Innovative Technology Fund and now less formally, are of great importance in showing the way.

A great deal of additional information appears on the Web server: employment, graduate programs, links to databases, computer programs, and other information of interest to biophysicists: the Annual Meeting, other conferences and meetings, international societies, society officers and membership, submission forms for *BJ*, awards and prizes, etc. To view the material on the WWW server, point your browser to :

<http://molbio.umn.edu/biophys/biophys.html>.

For further information, see the 'Biophysics on the Internet' page at the back of each issue.

The newsgroups have been less used, but we expect they will be more used in the future. The moderated newsgroup is a fast and inexpensive way to get information to our members. This information is transient, but in cases where permanence is important, the information will also be posted on the servers.

The unmoderated newsgroup, for discussion and informal interaction among users, is more problematical. It is often remarked that in all such newsgroups the S/N ratio is very low. Probably this is true of conversation in general. Newsgroups force us to eavesdrop on the conversations of others, some of which may turn out to be interesting but many of which are not. There is much discussion of 'agents,' which will be able to screen on-line stuff for relevance to our interests. Still, I like the idea that a high school student can send a message saying 'I'm interested in something I've heard of called biophysics. Can anybody tell me more about it, and where I should go to study it?' and get a variety of informed and thoughtful answers from practicing biophysicists.

Victor Bloomfield
Editor, *Biophysical Journal*