JOURNAL OF Applied Polymer SCIENCE

Bloggers, Welcome

Given the rise of blogging platforms and social media in the last few years, science could not possibly remain immune to this tide, and it has seen an explosion of dedicated bloggers and instant response to papers in social media.

Some of this has been welcomed by editors who, in the end, are understandably looking for new ways for their journals to shine in their respective (very crowded) fields, and to show authors that publishing their research in journal X makes their work more visible to more people than publishing it in journal Y. At the *Journal of Applied Polymer Science*, we also promote articles in our own news platform, www.materialsviews.com, and actively use social media to spread the word about outstanding research.

On the other hand, some have felt that the feedback speed, from bloggers and social media users, is a little too fast for the bloggers' own good, as a recent editorial in Current Biology[1] mentioned. In other words: think before you type, you will not regret it.

At the *Journal of Applied Polymer Science*, we think that new technologies are neither good nor bad but, since we are ever enthusiastic about applications as the name of our journal implies, we also think that applying new communication technologies to science is an unabashedly good development. We are, however, pragmatists as applied scientists should be, and thus we believe that:

(a) New technologies do not substitute, but integrate, traditional peer review: whatever the latter will morph into in the future there will always be, in our opinion, the need for a few specialists to pay close attention, and give feedback in a short amount of time. This is after all the process a startup has to go through, to get funded,[2] so we see no reason why scientific publishing should do away with this system that other fields are adopting.

(b) Extended feedback on a paper (before and after the review stage) adds massively to the resilience of the system in catching errors, honest or otherwise, and we believe this is also a good thing. After all, this is what scientific conferences have always been about: discussing with your peers the fine points of some particular field; now the discussion might happen through hashtags as opposed to focus sessions, but the difference is not as large as one might think.

(c) One should acknowledge that often the depth of the discussion through peer-reviewed comments to a paper, eventually published in a journal, and blog posts, might be different: if I know that every word I say is going to be weighed by a panel of experts, I might choose my words more carefully.

(d) On the other hand, bloggers stake their own reputation by what they write, and thus have an inherent interest in "getting it right." If they don't, the community will think twice about believing them the next time around. In the long run, credibility will reward those who think before they type.

We strongly believe that science is exchange of ideas, in whatever form this exchange might happen, and we should be pragmatic about these forms, understanding that no single vehicle will lead to perfect outcomes all the time, but integrating all these forms of communication/evaluation will enrich the exchange of ideas. Therefore: bloggers, welcome!

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REFERENCES

1. North, G. *Curr Biol* **2013**, *23*, R461.
2. Interview with Ben Wang, http://www.materialsviews.com/start-ups-in-materials-science-interview-with-ben-wang/ accessed 14 June 2013.