

New Developments for the Journal of Orthodontics in 2005 The *Journal of Orthodontics* will be moving to an ONLINE SUBMISSION AND REFEREEING SYSTEM ('OSRS')

In the light of increasing use of online submission and refereeing systems used by many scientific, technical and medical journals, the *Journal's* publishers' Maney Publishing have evaluated a number of online submission and refereeing systems comprehensively over the past year and will be selecting a system which they believe to be:

- easy for authors, editors, referees and journal administrators to use;
- comprehensive and 'feature-rich';
- well provided-for in customer- and technical support from the system vendor;
- judged reliable by other users solicited for their opinions; and
- widely known across the full range of subject areas that Maney publishes in.

"OSRSs" are widely used in medical (and dental) journals now and it is important that we keep abreast of these. Of the journals published by Maney, it is expected that the *Journal of Orthodontics* will be one of the first titles to adopt the chosen system so the days of paper, hard copy pictures and email submissions will hopefully be numbered.

What exactly is an OSRS?

An OSRS (which is Maney's own acronym) is a programmed system that allows authors to submit manuscripts online over the internet; facilitates online peer review and administration; provides tracking of manuscripts through peer review and generates reports and automatic email correspondence from the software databases. Many authors and referees will be familiar with such systems, e.g. those used by the *British Medical Journal* or the *British Dental Journal* (although the OSRS that Maney adopts will not be exactly the same as their systems).

In essence, an author, editor or referee (or journal administrator) signs up to receive a username and password (which is very straightforward and full instructions will be provided), and can log into the system to use or view the areas they are entitled to access.

Authors, for example, will need to enter the author area to submit a manuscript, or a revised manuscript. He or she will follow instructions on-screen as they go along. When the paper is correctly loaded, the Editor will be able to see it and allocate it to suitable referees.

Referees will be able to access their area of the system (which is 'blinded' from authors) and download papers (which are 'built' into one single PDF file from all the text and figure files that are submitted by the author).

The workflow between Editor and referees is entirely customisable according to the Journal, as are the standing emails and reports (which themselves can be adapted so that other comments can be added to otherwise standard letters).

What are the benefits of using an OSRS, rather than just receiving emailed submissions?

An OSRS allows much easier coordination of the administration involved in the submission and refereeing procedures. As well as removing the need for postal services, the Editor is able to assess at a glance the status of all papers in the peer review process. Furthermore, the system will, in time, build up a database of authors and referees and provide information on journal and referee turnaround times and referee "usage" etc. This can help to formulate editorial strategy (e.g. identifying geographical areas from where fewer submissions are being received and targeting those), and streamline the approaches to referees. The system provides a means of managing duties and schedules, and helps by automating many of the routine elements of the process, whilst still being flexible enough to be customised as much as necessary.

Many journals that have been using OSRS systems are reporting that the time taken to process a submission to final acceptance is being reduced by as much as half; and that, in fact, they are seeing increases in the number of unsolicited submissions by about 20%.

The main features and benefits are detailed below.

Authors

- Registration to use the system is quick and simple.
- Online author 'Help' facilities are available, together with links to the online Notes for Contributors.
- A wide range of file formats is accepted.
- Authors can submit revised manuscripts without having to enter all original files/contact data again.
- Revised versions of the manuscripts are easily identifiable by a different code.
- Pre-determined article types can be stipulated within the selection menu so that it is clear if the author has submitted a clinical or scientific paper etc.
- One single PDF file is created from all the submitted source files, which the author checks before final submission.
- Authors can access the system at any time to check the status of their papers — saving the need to contact the Editor to find out progress.

Referees

- Registration to use the system is quick and simple.
- There is access to an online 'Help' facility.
- Referees can be categorised by journal-defined areas of expertise, so that they are only contacted for relevant assignments.
- Referees' reports can be submitted online, and can be selected from a journal-defined list of recommendation terms.
- Referees can proof and print their entire review before submission to the journal office.
- Referees will *not* have to download multiple files for submissions: there is a single PDF built for each submission/revision so avoiding stacks of paper and photographs etc.
- When reviewing a revised paper, referees can be given access to other referees' comments (if the Editor feels this is appropriate).
- Different types of referees can be set up to have different workflows
- Referees can indicate dates when they are not available, and equally can be set up to receive reminders if they have previously agreed to a deadline which is (over)due.

How will Maney manage the implementation of the OSRS?

Maney intends to adopt the OSRS for a number of their science titles within the next few months. As well as arranging all the necessary training for the editorial office, Maney will assign a Project Manager who will oversee all aspects of the implementing the system and resolving queries that come through the editorial office. It is recognized that the level of disruption to referees, authors and editors must be kept to a minimum.

It is hoped that the system will 'go live' in early 2005 for the *Journal of Orthodontics*, although this will not take effect until Maney is confident, with the editorial office, that the system is properly configured and we are confident in how to utilize it. These changes will represent a period of very major change for the Journal but we hope that these developments will improve the Journal for all users in the long run. Please keep a watch on the website (<http://www.maney.co.uk/journals/notes/orthodontics>) for further news over the coming weeks and months.

Friedy Luther
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