

## Editorial

# Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology and the Electronic Publishing Revolution

As we count down the twentieth century, and indeed the second millennium, media commentators around the globe are indulging in the practices of prediction and review. Some are combining the two pastimes and reviewing predictions, often with embarrassing or amusing results. The mayor of one American township was reputed to be so impressed on seeing the telephone for the first time, that he predicted that one day there would be a telephone in every city. Eminent scientists in the past have variously declared that air-travel would never be a commercial proposition, that the world market for programmable computers would be no more than half a dozen, and television was a passing diversion of no more than entertainment value.

It is easy to smile at these snippets, but it does lead one to wonder what firm beliefs of today will seem laughable to the citizens of the twenty-first century. The other side of the coin is to speculate on those predictions that have not yet come to pass, some of which never will, some of which seem to be in a state of constant prediction. Those in the latter category can be ignored at one's peril, often suddenly being realised after years of minimal progress and empty promise.

The paperless office, electronic publishing, and on-line journals are terms that have promised much and delivered sporadically. However, it is my belief that all three aspects of the electronic revolution have truly come of age in time for the millennium.

Discussion on the paperless office may seem out of place in an editorial in this journal; however, the concept and its application has made a tremendous difference to the management and tracking of research papers received for publication. Central to the realisation of the paperless office is the near-universal use of e-mail and especially e-mail attachments. It is now realistic, not just possible, for a research paper to be submitted to this journal as an e-mail attachment, even including photographs. The paper can be sent the same way to Referees who can report back by e-mail. If the paper is acceptable, amendments and copy-editing can all be done on screen and delivered to typesetter/printers, again as e-mail attachments. For most people, there is still a need for proof-reading the printed version, but even this step can be done electronically. The whole process from submission

to publication can not only be quicker, but considerably more efficient for the Editorial office and more economical for Authors in terms of postage and stationery. Authors who wish to avail themselves of these e-mail advantages can contact us at [jpp@rpsgb.org.uk](mailto:jpp@rpsgb.org.uk)

Electronic publishing, in the sense of using computing systems for editing and producing journals is touched on in the discussion on the paperless office. However, it also refers to the appearance of the finished article as an electronic product, viewed on the computer screen, instead of on the printed page. The conversion of conventional journals to electronic journals would suggest even greater efficiencies, and the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology* is now pleased to be able to report the immediate availability of the journal, from the start of volume 51 (1999) in an electronic version. The electronic text is available free to all subscribers and may be accessed through ingenta, an on-line service for publishers. The Journal can be accessed directly at [www.ingenta.com/journals/browse/rpsgb/jpp](http://www.ingenta.com/journals/browse/rpsgb/jpp). Anyone who is not already an ingenta user will need to register at [help@ingenta.com](mailto:help@ingenta.com) to receive a user name and password. Non-subscribers can use ingenta as 'guests' and will be able to access full text after paying with their credit card. The full text is available as pdf and users will therefore need a pdf reader such as Acrobat. Once accessed, files can be searched and can be printed out or saved to disk.

What's in a name? Is an electronic journal the same as an on-line journal? For many, the terms are interchangeable and it would indeed be difficult to pin down universally accepted differences. For the purposes of this discussion, however, I will assume an electronic journal is nothing more than a mirror of the printed version on a computer screen, and allowing printing out of the conventional journal pages. An on-line journal, on the other hand, is a more comprehensive animal. Apart from being able to carry out text searches, an on-line journal used to its greatest potential will be more than a convenient printing press. For example, tables can display values calculated from raw data contained in the document, or photographs need not be limited to the resolution of the printed version but could be included as files with the potential to magnify to

the original resolution. Animated diagrams or video clips would also form part of the on-line journal. It should be noted that already many magazines bought from the news stands come with CDs with amplified and animated versions of their printed content. With the pace of change in the use and

power of personal computers, these desirable aspects will soon be commonplace.

Welcome to the twenty-first century!

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