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Editorial

JACS on the Internet

There is no question that digital computers have had a large impact on the publication of scientific research. *JACS* uses computers in the management of the journal data base and in production of the journal. Most manuscripts are now submitted in final form as floppy disks, and e-mail is often used for correspondence with authors and reviewers. Recently, especially with the wide accessibility and usage of the World Wide Web (WWW), interest has turned to electronic publishing, i.e., to the posting of manuscripts on the web rather than, or in addition to, producing a hard copy (print) journal. The advantages of electronic publishing include the faster appearance of a paper at a presumed lower cost than printing (with the attendant possibility of wider distribution) as well as the ability to provide materials, like computer programs, movies, color figures, and large amounts of experimental data, not available in the hard copy. Concerns about electronic publishing include the maintenance of the quality and integrity of the published literature, providing for the long-term archiving of papers, and assuring that financial support is available to carry out the needed peer review and maintenance of the archive. These points are discussed in a booklet available from ACS Publications: *Will Science Publishing Perish?*

Shorter Papers in Print Journals with Details on the Internet

Conventional journals have been under increasing pressure to publish longer papers and a greater number of them. The number of active scientists has been growing rapidly with an attendant increase in the number of manuscripts submitted for publication (the number of submissions for *JACS* grew from 3273 in 1987 to 4348 in 1995). In addition, available instrumentation, to a large extent driven by the wide use of computers, has made possible the generation of vast amounts of data to support a scientific study. This has tended to make published papers longer. Between 1987 and 1995 the average length of a full paper published in *JACS* has grown from 6.7 to 8.3 pages. Since *JACS* (as well as the other journals published by the ACS) has a set page budget, this results in fewer papers being published. Indeed *JACS* receives many more papers that describe sound and interesting chemistry than we can accommodate within a reasonable page budget.

The journals have been trying to address the changing trends and problems and find the best way to utilize the electronic media in publication. At *JACS* we continue to feel that maintaining high quality through peer review and careful editing is necessary and more than compensates for the significant delays such review often entails. We also believe that the ease of reading and handling and security of archiving continue to make the hard copy version of the journal desirable. ACS has been publishing a CD version of the journal since 1994. We have also been making the supporting

information (formerly called supplementary material) available on the WWW in a form that is easy and fast to download (as described on the masthead of the journal). Supporting information can also be submitted as an ACSII text file (along with the hard copy), if desired. In this case it is maintained in that format in the on-line version to enable readers to download the file in a machine-readable form. Supporting information is also included with the CD and microfiche versions. We continue to explore the use of digital technology in publication. To keep the journal size within reasonable limits while still publishing as many of the best papers as possible, we will encourage, and sometimes require, that the supporting information be used to provide more of the experimental details and discussion of interest mainly to specialists. This supporting information will soon be available on line on the publication date of the journal.

JACS Web Page—An Experiment

The *JACS* web page (accessible via the ACS publications page at <http://pubs.acs.org>) displays instructions for authors, links to supporting information, and the table of contents for the latest issue of the journal. *As an experiment* we will also try out a section for selected correspondence and comments. Readers can submit, by way of a form available on the web page, scientific comments pertaining to recently published *JACS* papers. Authors will be asked to reply. Posting of comments will *not* be automatic. Comments for posting will be selected by the editors and they will not be sent out for review. There will be no appeals for comments not selected. Comments will not be published in hard copy or CD versions of the journal nor will they be archived. We hope these comments will generate interesting discussions and help amplify and clarify ideas and results published in *JACS* papers. They are not meant to discuss priorities or present still unpublished ideas or results. Additions and corrections will still be published in the printed version of *JACS*. We hope the level of discussion on the *JACS* page will be significantly higher than the average WWW newsgroup! This experiment will be terminated if the community feels it is not useful (or if it becomes too burdensome for the editors).

At this time we cannot accept manuscripts submitted electronically for review; however, we are investigating the possibility of doing this in the future.

As stated at the outset, the science publication field is evolving rapidly. The new possibilities are intriguing, but the community will best be served by an orderly evolution that involves the best features of both the print and electronic media.

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