

The Information Age and the JACS Beta Site

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The Information Age and the JACS Beta Site

The last quarter of the 20th century ushered in the dawn of the information age, which shows no signs of abating. The wide availability of personal computers and ready access to the World Wide Web have forever altered the way we access information and communicate. Modern information technology and the Internet allow the easy, rapid, and mass distribution of information, which represents the biggest revolution in the dissemination of ideas and in publishing since Gutenberg invented the modern printing press over half a millennium ago.

In its 129 years of publication, the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* has been at the forefront of many innovations in publishing, dating back to Editor Arthur Lamb introducing the formal peer review process to the journal and the publishing community in 1918. Lamb chose scientists other than members of the editorial board to review manuscripts and to do so anonymously. That innovation served as the benchmark for responsible peer review and to this day remains the lynchpin of scholarly publishing.

The digital revolution provides new and ground-breaking opportunities for the presentation and dissemination of scientific research, as scientific publishing moves more and more into the digital age and readers increasingly retrieve scientific literature online, while researchers and authors enter into collaborations that span the globe. Users want to access a rapidly expanding information repository with increasing speed—or they want the relevant information delivered directly to a growing number of hand-held devices. Customization and specialization of information discovery and delivery is also a high priority.

As JACS approaches its 130th anniversary, we are seizing the opportunity to once again add to the journal's history of embracing innovation as JACS continues its mission "to capture the very best in original fundamental research in all areas of the chemical and molecular sciences" with the release of the JACS Beta Web site (<http://pubs.acs.org/JACSbeta>).

In May, the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* launched JACS Beta, the testing ground for the journal Web site. This site is intended to present, encourage, and facilitate innovations and new approaches to the presentation of chemical and related research to help further communication and understanding as emerging fields and disciplines blend at the interfaces of chemistry, biology, and beyond—essentially, to extend and advance the missions of the journal, scholarly publishing, and the chemical enterprise.

Content on the JACS Beta Web site is updated frequently. The inaugural beta projects include:

JACS Virtual Issues. Thematic Web-based collections of the best recently published JACS papers. The first collection explores the Total Synthesis of Biologically Active Natural Products and is edited by JACS Associate Editor William R. Roush.

JACS Interviews. Listen online to, or download to your MP3 player, an interview with William R. Roush, guest editor of the first JACS Virtual Issue on the Total Synthesis of Biologically Active Natural Products.

JACS Audio Summaries. Listen online to, or download to your MP3 player, a full-text reading of selected JACS Communications.

JACS PowerPoint Slide Sets. Download PowerPoint slide sets containing all figures for selected JACS publications.

Through user polls, surveys, and feedback forms, the JACS Beta site allows evaluation of the usability and usefulness of the emerging web tools and fosters collaboration with visitors to the journal Web site. This site is freely available to all users, facilitating widespread usage and discoverability of this new feature.

We encourage you to visit JACS Beta frequently in order to participate as existing projects will be further developed, new projects will be tested, and the scientific community's preferences will be sought, evaluated, and ultimately implemented. Visitors are encouraged to register for RSS feeds to keep abreast of the ongoing developments and updates. We hope this site brings us even closer to meeting your needs as a researcher and as a JACS author or reader, and that we can work together to develop tools that empower your research, teaching, and learning experience.

Peter J. Stang, Editor
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